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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

Issue 133
Oct 2003
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Soul Calibur II



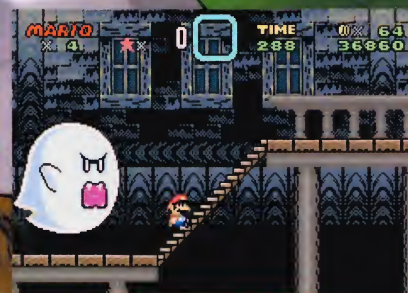
**It's brutal! It's awesome!
It's got Link, dammit!**

**Plus: Master Link's
deadliest moves p104**

12-page special

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32 heroes! Head-to-head! Shock winner!*



*Seriously,
you just
won't
believe
who's
the
hardest!





Spotlight Off The Ball™ Vision. Now your reading of the game makes all the difference. Achieve complete control over every player on the pitch. Not only the one with the ball. Play passes into space and anticipate the movement of team-mates. Pick out the player who has made the most prescient run and deliver the perfect pass to split the opposition.



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YOU'VE MOSTLY BEEN BUYING...

Pokémon Sapphire



Look at him. That little Pokémon-collecting dude thinks he's so fly, popping wheelies on his bike and showing off to townsfolk. But then, he's got every right to feel clever, because *Pokémon Sapphire* has slaughtered the competition and even eclipsed last month's leader, *Ruby*.

That means he's running around, chucking Poké Balls and trapping tiny animals on thousands of little screens everywhere, and sales are showing no signs of slowing down. If he gets any more fly, you'll soon see him riding in a Benzo with Wu-Tang pumping out on full volume, sticking his middle finger up at his fans like a gangsta.

NINTENDO SALES CHART

Just look at that! Only one GameCube game in the top-ten and it's the ropy *P.N.03*. We despair of you lot...

TITLE	PUBLISHER
1 <i>Pokémon Sapphire</i> (GBA)	Nintendo
2 <i>Pokémon Ruby</i> (GBA)	Nintendo
3 <i>The Two Towers</i> (GBA)	EA
4 <i>Yu-Gi-Oh! Worldwide Edition</i> (GBA)	Konami
5 <i>The Chamber of Secrets</i> (GBA)	EA
6 <i>Crash Bandicoot 2: N-Tranced</i> (GBA)	Universal
7 <i>P.N.03</i> (GC)	Capcom
8 <i>Zelda: A Link to the Past</i> (GBA)	Nintendo
9 <i>The Simpsons: Road Rage</i> (GBA)	THQ
10 <i>Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku II</i> (GBA)	Infogrames

Welcome

Welcome to NOM UK



While we've been working on this month's **NOM UK**...

- 1** *Super Mario Kart* battle was fought
- 2** holes-in-one were hit on *Mario Golf*
- 2** different covers were considered
- 3** non-work games were finished by us
- 7** games were imported from Japan, including *Boktai* and *Final Fantasy*
- 8** of us had an accident when we heard about the *Mario Kart* bonus disc
- 8** of us also had an accident when we heard the e-Reader was back on
- 26** *Winning Eleven* matches were played (one was abandoned)
- 30** of you beat our *Super Smash Bros. Melee* giant Yoshi challenge
- 117** posts were written about the new-look *NOM UK* on internet forums

Enjoy the mag!

Tim Street

Tim Street, Editor

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(and their favourite *Street Fighter* hard man)

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A one-year UK subscription is currently £42; Europe £43.65; World £68.65.

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Back issues cost £3.95 UK; £4.95 Europe and Rest of the World.

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All entries for the competitions in *NOM UK* 133 must be received by 10/10/03 to qualify. The winner will receive the stated prize from the competition they have entered. If, for any reason beyond the promoter's control, it is not possible to provide the stated prize, the promoter reserves the right to award an alternative prize of no lesser value.

The promoter's choice of prize is final. There is no cash alternative available. No entries can be returned and the promoter will enter into no correspondence. The prize draw takes place on 16/10/03 and the winner will be notified within one day of the draw. The winner will be chosen at random from the correct entries received. Open to UK and overseas residents. We reserve the right to use the winners in any publicity. No employees of Emap or other companies involved in this promotion are eligible to enter. No purchase necessary. The Editor's decision is final. Only one entry per household.

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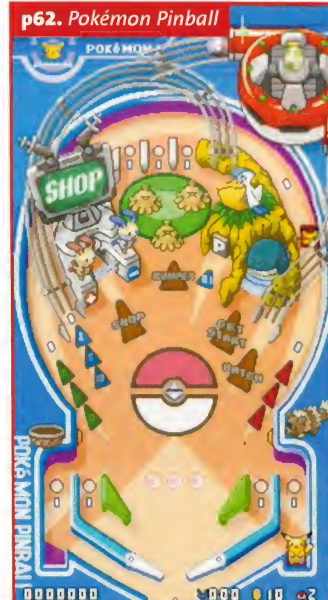
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p62. Pokémon Pinball



p92. Tiger Woods



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p48. Mario Kart: Double Dash!!



p64. Four Swords



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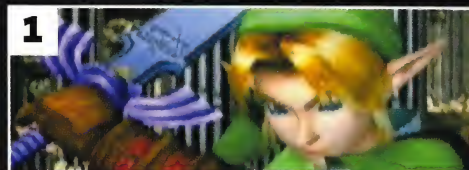
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God Bless Nintendo For...

Soul Calibur II

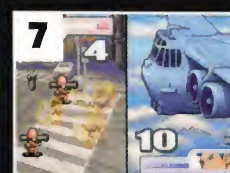
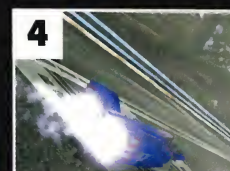
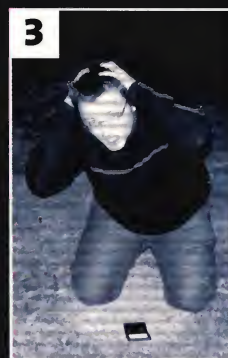
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GOD BLESS
NINTENDO
FOR...



10 Things we didn't know last month...

1 We have a secret ninja hiding in all of us (*Soul Calibur II*, p10) **2** Grown men and fancy dress don't mix (*Final Fantasy*, p58) **3** Dean is really scary when he's had no sleep (*Boktai*, p52) **4** The dry cleaners make so much money cleaning Tim's pants (*F-Zero GX*, p80) **5** An L-shaped Tetris block would crush WWE's The Rock (*Nintendo Fight Club*, p66) **6** It's possible to make a sow's ear out of a silk purse (*Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure*, p98) **7** Carpet bombing can be cute (*Advance Wars 2*, p86) **8** Our readers can sort mail like laser-guided cyborg postmen (*Zelda* letter-sorting challenge, p114) **9** Games can still make us want to kill each other (*Mario Kart: Double Dash*, p48) **10** Shigsy wants to destroy all RPGs! (Miyamoto interview, p40)



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**Tested****First. Official. Best.****GAME INFO**

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Nintendo

Website: www.soulcalibur2.com

Players: 1-2

Memory: 4 blocks

Soul Calibur II



GOD BLESS
NINTENDO
FOR...

Is it the best GameCube fighter ever? You betcha! *Soul Calibur II* is here. You need it.

> Weapons. Great big, sharp, pointy, bloodletting, death-making instruments of destruction. Surely a fight's not a real fight without them; it's just a scrap. Nothing's really at stake with fists and feet, it takes the threat of imminent metal-edged death to spice things up, give things purpose, make things ultra-real. Maybe that's why *Soul Calibur II* is so damn good. Because when you see an eight-foot, 50-stone, muscle-bound killer brandishing an axe, you understand that it's you or him. And when it's all over and the behemoth lies motionless, slain by the power of your mighty blade, there's only one thing left to do: play some more.







On first inspection *Soul Calibur II* seems disappointing. The intro movie is nice, especially when Link throws some dangerous shapes, but the Main Menu seems decidedly empty. Surely a fighter like this should be chock-full of modes just waiting to be played, but initially there's just the standard Arcade stuff, a Weapon Master mode and an Options menu.

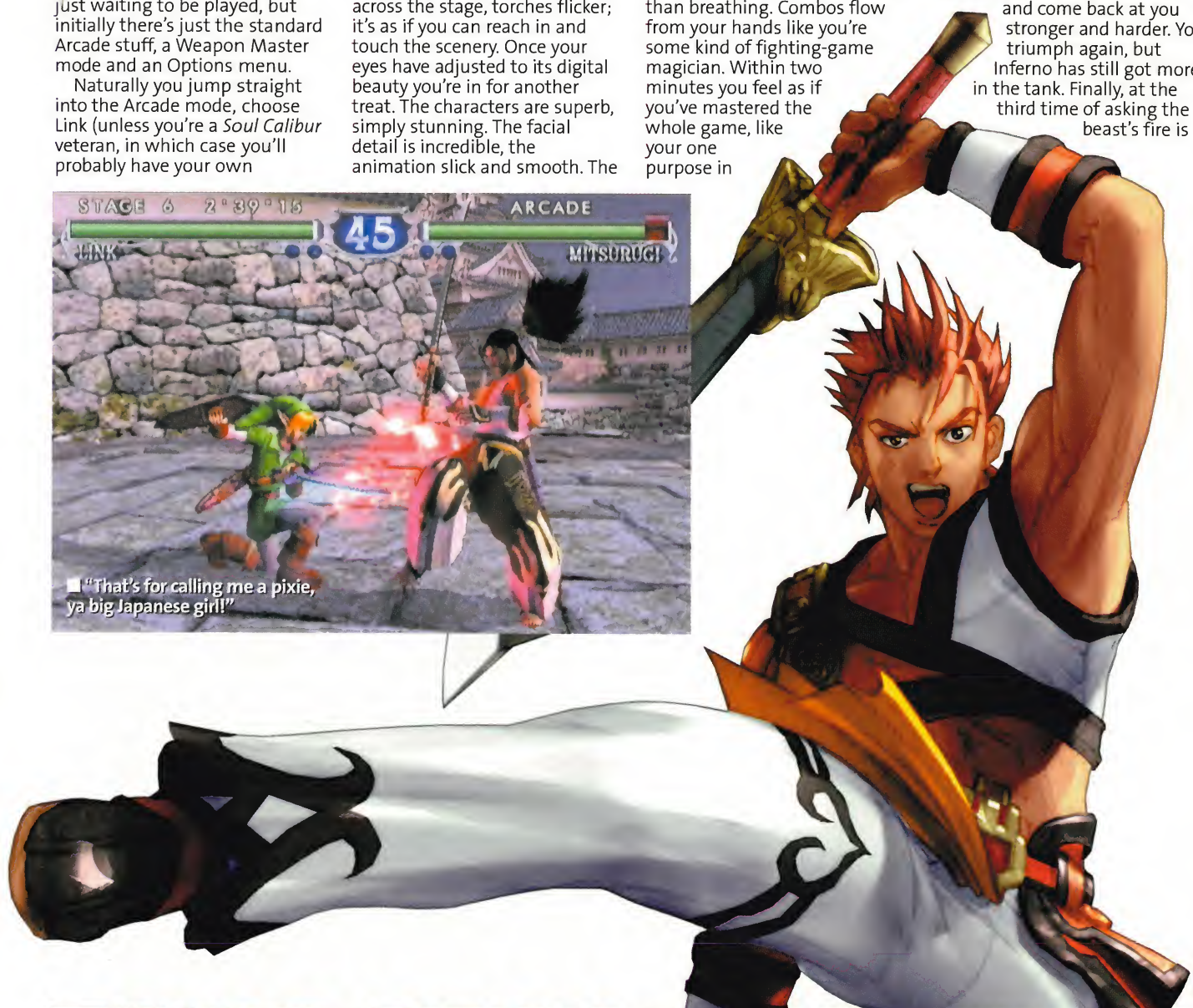
Naturally you jump straight into the Arcade mode, choose Link (unless you're a *Soul Calibur* veteran, in which case you'll probably have your own

favourite) and enter the tournament. And that's about when your jaw will hit the carpet and drool will start spilling over your shoes. The camera pans around a beautiful fighting arena. Leaves fall from the trees, the wind blows softly across the stage, torches flicker; it's as if you can reach in and touch the scenery. Once your eyes have adjusted to its digital beauty you're in for another treat. The characters are superb, simply stunning. The facial detail is incredible, the animation slick and smooth. The

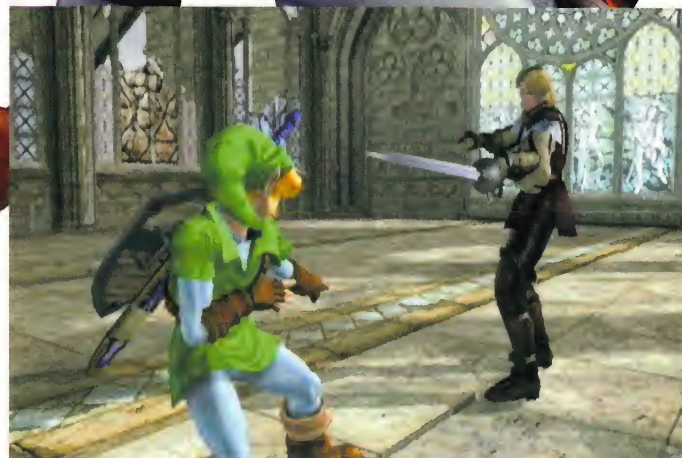
costumes move like real fibres as you leap around the arena.

But the final touch of brilliance comes as soon as the order to fight comes in. *Soul Calibur II* feels like something you have been playing your whole life, like it's more natural than breathing. Combos flow from your hands like you're some kind of fighting-game magician. Within two minutes you feel as if you've mastered the whole game, like your one purpose in

life was to do nothing but play this. After ten minutes you've battled the no-hopers and reached the final test: Inferno – an enormous flaming beast standing proudly in a pit of fire. With a few deft strikes he's destroyed, only to reassemble and come back at you stronger and harder. You triumph again, but Inferno has still got more in the tank. Finally, at the third time of asking the beast's fire is



■ Learning to combine defence with attack is crucial to success. As is using a mixture of weapon and hand-to-hand moves



■ Before facing the final battle against the almighty Inferno, Link must square off against the foppish Raphael. He's no soft touch, either



■ Ivy is a devastating character with some very cool moves



"The fire is extinguished and you stand triumphant. You feel like a god. And you've only been playing for 15 minutes."

extinguished and you stand triumphant. You feel like a god. And you've only been playing for 15 minutes.

The story goes that a sword once existed, possessed with immeasurable powers, made of two blades that fed on human souls. This sword was called Soul Edge. A brave warrior managed to track down the evil sword and shatter one of the blades, but this didn't have the desired effect and the one remaining blade was used to wreak havoc across Europe. In time, the horrific killings stopped and the tales of the sword passed into history. No-one knew of the existence of a sword named Soul Calibur, the yin to Soul Edge's yang. It was this blade that had partly destroyed Soul Edge, but had now been lost in the void. Meanwhile, fragments of Soul Edge were having their

influence across the world, carried around by travellers and merchants. *Soul Calibur II* tells the story of those who have attempted to track down the shards of Soul Edge.

There are 20 warriors to choose from in *Soul Calibur II*, each with a story to tell as to why they are hunting the elusive blade. From the Japanese mercenary, Mitsurugi, to the crazed, blind servant Voldo, each has his or her own weapons and fighting styles. Some are faster, some more powerful, some good, some evil; all of the usual fighting game clichés apply. The special trick they all have is the power to charge their souls, giving their attacks more potency.

And in case you've had your head trapped under an Xbox for the last six months you'll no doubt be aware that Link makes an appearance, looking like he

Six of the worst

Not all fighters have the power of *Soul Calibur II*. Just look at these turkeys...

■ *Soul Calibur II* is the best fighter on GameCube, no question. But you don't reach a gaming pinnacle such as this without a few blips along the way and even Nintendo machines have been home to some of the worst excuses for brawling titles the world has ever seen. Here, for your viewing displeasure, are the dirty half dozen, the six worst fighting games to grace our beloved Nintendo systems.



Mortal Kombat Trilogy (N64, 1997)

Great graphics masked an altogether dismal instalment of the bloodthirsty franchise. In a world bathed in the glory of 3D fighters like *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter*, *MK Trilogy* stuck to its 2D guns. Terrible sound and muffled speech compounded the problems.



***Mortal Kombat* (GBA, 2002)** You can beat the whole thing with just one move! That's not a game! Back when the original *Mortal Kombat* was released it was a revelation, but this just beggars belief. Good characters, reasonable graphics and rubbish gameplay. Get *Deadly Alliance*, it's the GBA *Kombat*.



***Fighter's Destiny* (N64, 1998)** When you throw a character to the ground, fire spews up from the floor and looks like a giant dollop of ketchup. How cool? Not very. There was also an unlockable cow costume to wear – we're not making this stuff up. We liked it at the time of release. We hate it in retrospect.



Clayfighter 63 1/3 (N64, 1998)

This half-arsed attempt at a fighter could scoop the award for worst Nintendo game ever. With its 'quirky' brand of humour and a guest appearance from Earthworm Jim, *Clayfighter 63 1/3* wobbled into our lives and was quickly shown the door.



***Barbarian* (GameCube, 2002)** *Barbarian* has an interesting mix of characters, from a mutant ape to an undead Viking and some of the stages are quite pretty, but the whole thing falls flat on its loin-clothed arse with a combo system that's reliant on bashing the A and B buttons in varying amounts.



***Rise of the Robots* (Super NES, 1995)** *Rise of the Robots* looked like nothing else, but the game was never going to live up to the hype and it crumbled. Shockingly slow gameplay, awkward controls and disgraceful collision detection – everything that could go wrong did.



Familiar faces

Character cameos are as old as the hills. Just look...

■ Link isn't the only Nintendo character who's jumped ship and made it into another game. Over the years, Nintendo has been renowned for placing its mascot characters in a host of other titles.

Even Mario isn't averse to a bit of bloodletting as he starred as a guest referee in *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out* on the NES. He also appears in *Sim City* on the Super NES if you manage to create a metropolis with a population over 500,000. Elsewhere he's been seen in *Pilot Wings 64* as a giant face carved into the rock. And if you crashed into it as a human cannonball or fired three missiles into it from your gyrocopters, it changed to Wario.

Perhaps the greatest appearance by a gang of Nintendo characters outside of *Super Smash Bros. Melee* came if you were a gaming guru at NES *Tetris*. Completing the ultra-hard 9-5 Type B game brought up a screen with Mario, Link, Kid Icarus, Peach, Donkey Kong, Samus and Bowser.



■ "They went that-a-way!" Xianghua offers some useful advice to the adventurers



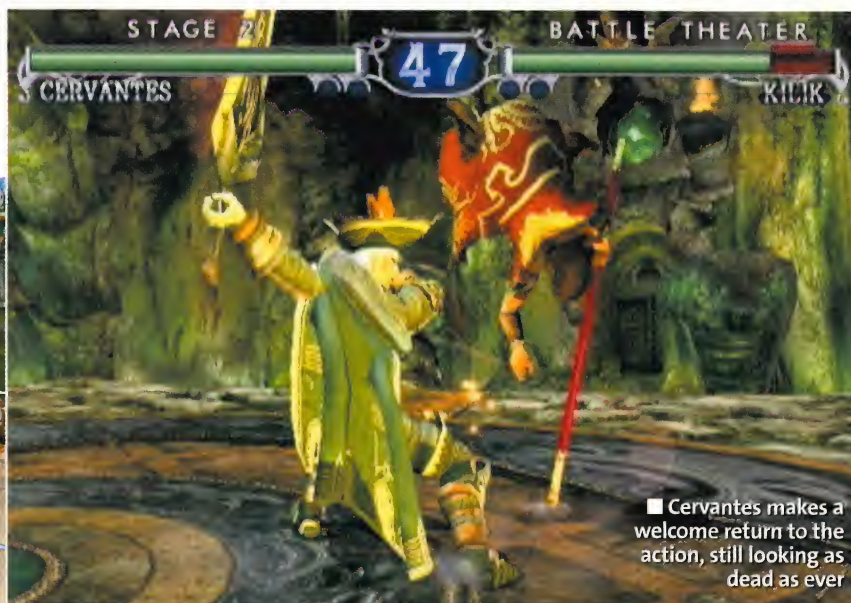
just stepped out of the Space World 2000 GameCube demo video. Some have mocked his inclusion in the game, but he's a serious contender.

Compared to the other platforms' exclusive characters (Xbox gets *Spawn*, PS2 gets *Tekken's* Heihachi) Link's the only one that really fits, have a look at 'Who's the daddy' (p15) if you don't believe us.

He's not just there to make up the numbers either. Link is armed with the Master Sword, his trusty shield, a boomerang, bow and bombs. In truth these hefty weapons are a little bit easy to access and seem quite unfair, especially when you square off against the young Hyrulian for the first time. But it's credit to the depth and variety of *Soul Calibur II's* characters that, after you've played it for a few hours, you won't automatically select Link; Mitsurugi and Raphael are two equally competent characters



■ Tekken fans may not recognise Yoshimitsu in his fetching pink outfit



■ Cervantes makes a welcome return to the action, still looking as dead as ever



that, dare we say it, feel a little more complete in the context of the game.

There's another new character in here as well, created by Todd McFarlane, the man behind Spawn. Necrid, for that's his name, is a hulking great green beast, like the Hulk on a Monday morning. He has a swirling vortex in his chest and carries a ball of energy rather than a weapon that he can transform into an axe and mash your skull into a red sludgy mess. He's actually not that great a character, nowhere near as good as Link, but it's nice to see new stuff crammed into the home console version of the game. *Calibur* veterans will also recognise Lizardman. He is in here and he's playable, but you only get the chance to use him in certain stages of the Weapon Master mode.

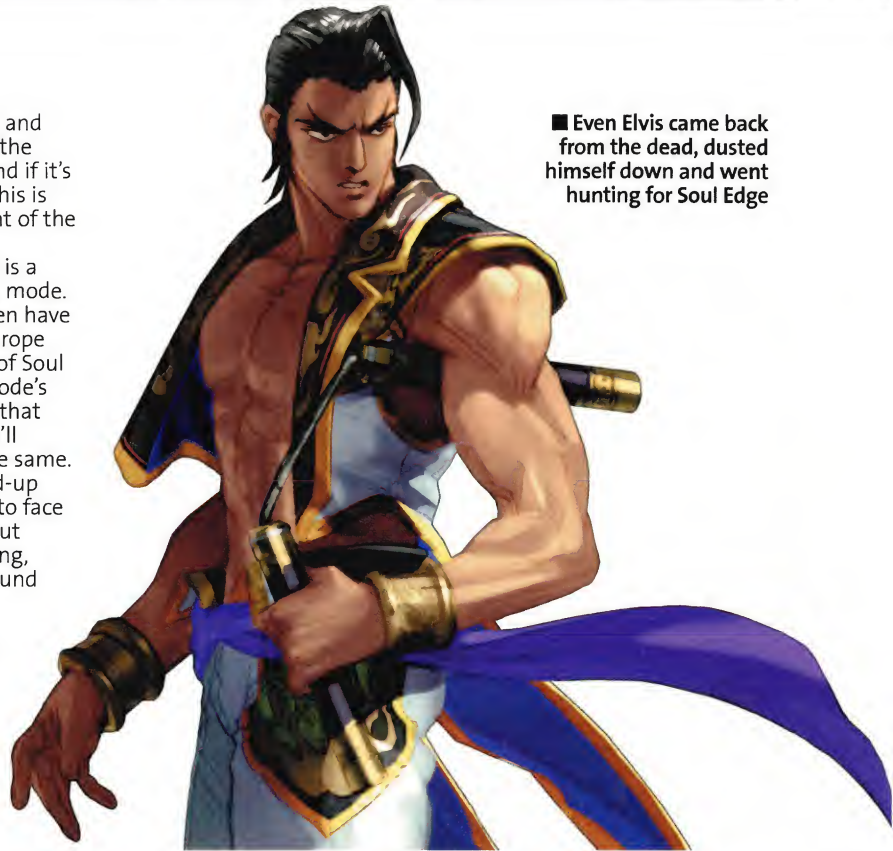
After the initial disappointment of the brief Arcade mode you'll begin to search for something with a bit

more depth. The obvious and only choice left to you is the Weapon Master mode and if it's depth you're after then this is *Soul Calibur II*'s equivalent of the Atlantic Ocean.

Weapon Master mode is a posh way of saying Story mode. Choose a warrior and then have him or her trek across Europe searching for the pieces of Soul Edge. Weapon Master mode's brilliance lies in the way that the fights are set up. You'll never have two fights the same. The first task is a dressed-up tutorial where you have to face an opponent and carry out certain moves like blocking, slashing and moving around the arena.

From there it's off on your journey. The variety in the fights is seriously impressive. Some opponents can only be damaged whilst in the air, some can only be defeated by a Ring Out.

■ Even Elvis came back from the dead, dusted himself down and went hunting for Soul Edge



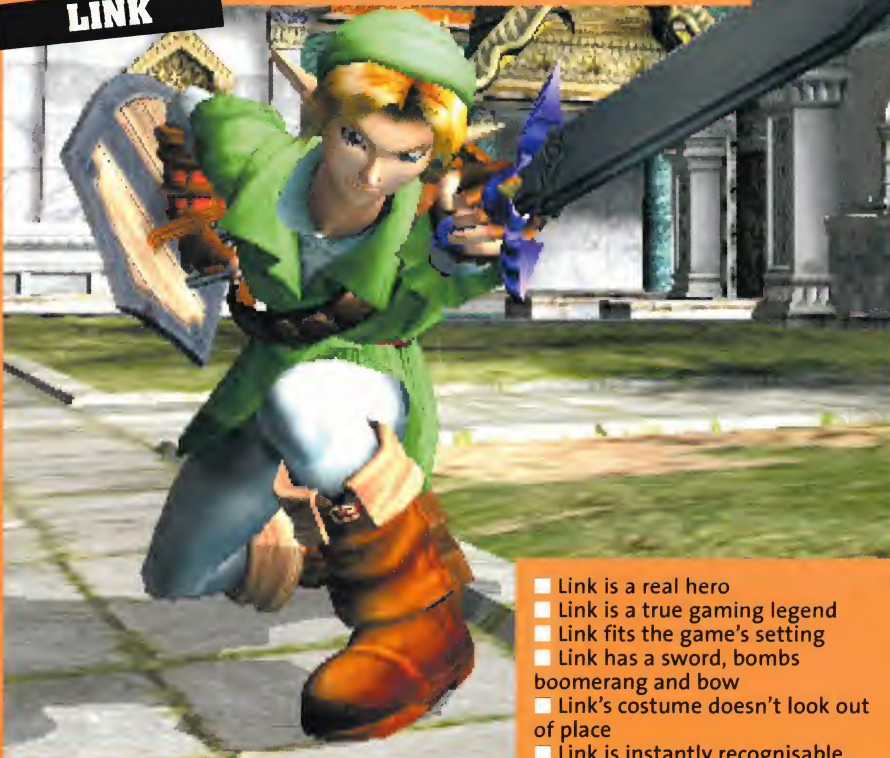
“It’s credit to the depth and variety in *Soul Calibur II*’s characters that, after a while, you won’t automatically select Link.”

Who's the daddy?

With exclusive characters for PS2 and Xbox, too, did we get the best deal?

■ Come on, it's plain for all to see that GameCube owners are getting the better deal with Link as the bonus character. Here's the proof.

LINK



- Link is a real hero
- Link is a true gaming legend
- Link fits the game's setting
- Link has a sword, bombs boomerang and bow
- Link's costume doesn't look out of place
- Link is instantly recognisable

SPAWN



- Spawn isn't a gaming character
- Spawn is from the modern day
- Spawn has no real connection with gaming
- Spawn starred in a rubbish film
- Spawn looks like a reject from The Darkness

HEIHACHI



- Heihachi doesn't have a weapon
- Heihachi wears stupid wooden sandals
- Heihachi is 75 years old
- Heihachi needs his bed pan



Some of the fights take place in arenas high off the ground, meaning the wind comes into play and can blow you out of the ring. Some fighters constantly recharge their energy as they fight you. And, at other times, you'll constantly lose energy as you battle. The list goes on. There are also situations where you'll have to fight more than one opponent in a row with varying amounts of health being put back onto your energy bar as you progress.

As well as this, Weapon Master mode gives you the opportunity to increase both your wealth and experience. Winning fights means winning money and this allows you to purchase new arenas, new outfits and, most importantly, new weapons. There are over 200 in all for you to get your hands on and the selection varies from region to region, meaning that you'll need to play through the mode loads of times if you're to stand a chance of getting your hands on all of

them. You'll need to travel across Europe twice just to actually finish the Weapon Master mode once and second time around things start getting really difficult.

Added to this is the ability to upgrade your character by gaining experience points. You begin life as a Newcomer, but soon you'll be racing through the rankings, from Peasant to Infantryman to Knight. What's more, each class has its own sub-class; iron, bronze, silver, gold and platinum. To make it all the way to Grand Edgemaster of the Basilisk you'll need a whopping 500,000 experience points. Good luck.

This is about the time that you start to realise that you're not all that and your initial dominance in the Arcade mode was just the game's way of breaking you in gently. That's when reality hits: if you want to be truly great at this game, you'll need to practice like a ninja (and that means a lot).

While in Weapon Master



Sado-masochistic hell bitch versus timid-looking, mild-mannered schoolgirl. Seem like a mismatch? Get outta here!

Hand-to-hand combat?

Pad or Stick? Choose your weapon!

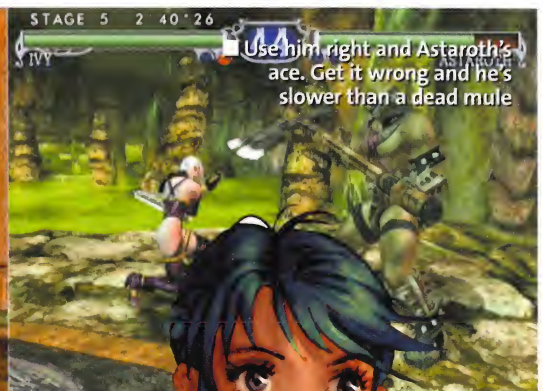
At the moment, you'll have to use a GameCube pad to play *Soul Calibur II*. The Japanese get a choice: GameCube pad or super-cool arcade-style stick, resplendent in *Soul Calibur II* livery. Are we being shafted? Not unless you're used to the arcade version of the game.

The stick has a slightly better button layout for *Soul Calibur II* – it's a little easier to push the three-button combos on the stick than it is on the pad and if you're a real arcade veteran then you can't beat the feeling of a proper micro-switched joystick in your hands.

However, if you've never played *Soul Calibur II* or you come to this game from a console background then the pad feels intuitive. You soon adapt to the button layout and it all feels like it should. Track the stick down if you want to feel authentic, but it's hardly essential.



If you're a *Soul Calibur II* arcade nut and you're loaded hunt out the stick. Otherwise, leave it



“The real winner is the control system; simple enough to get to grips with, complex enough to give you reason to practice.”

mode you'll be rewarded for your achievements and when you return to the Main Menu you'll be pleasantly surprised at the things you've managed to unlock. What's more, each new mode has a variety of sub-modes. Survival mode, for example, has options such as Standard, Deathmatch and No Recovery. Setting records in these events will also unlock new things. This game should really be called *Soul Calibur II: Pandora's Box*.

With all of the options on offer it'd be easy to overlook the other areas of the game, but it's hard to ignore when it looks this good. The detail in the characters is truly superb with finely sculptured features and realistic-looking hair. Backgrounds are equally stunning with realistic water effects, molten lava and wind doing their best to distract you from the action. The music is stirring stuff, excellently orchestrated and perfectly suited to the game. The only real letdown in the presentation is the Hollywood voice-over that

accompanies each fight. It's been a staple of the series for some time now and it's easily ignored, but it does sound cheesy.

But the real winner in *Soul Calibur II* is the control system; simple enough to let you get to grips with it straight away yet complex enough to give you reason to practice. *Soul Calibur II* allows you to use the 3D Stick, which is a welcome addition as it feels smooth and accurate. **A** is used to thrust your weapon, **X** for an overhead sword slash. **Y** is kick and **B** is block.

The shoulder buttons are also used to block and jump. The **Z** button charges up your soul, allowing you to unleash attacks 40% more powerful than usual, but you have to make sure you give yourself space as charging up leaves you vulnerable to attacks.



Tested

First. Official. Best.

Lets have it!

So, who's the real king of GameCube fighters?

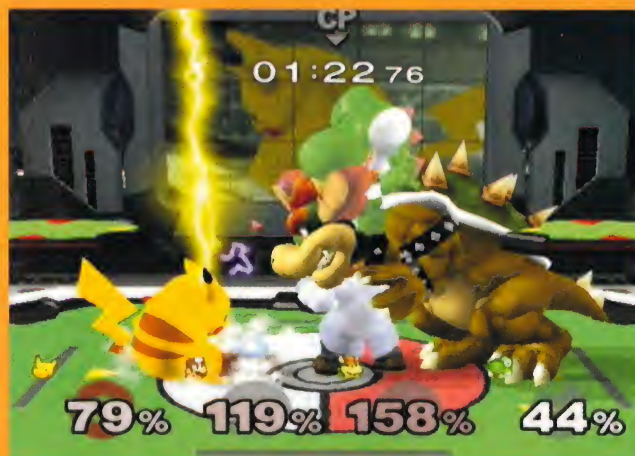
■ Only one GameCube fighting game can come close to the brilliance of *Soul Calibur II* and that's *Super Smash Bros. Melee*. So let's settle this once and for all. Gloves off, knives out, no holds barred.

Super Smash Bros. Melee is a firm favourite among GameCube owners. It has great graphics and it moves at a lightning pace. But best of all it has every conceivable ounce of Nintendo history poured into it. The characters, the music, the arenas, it all wrecks of Nintendo.

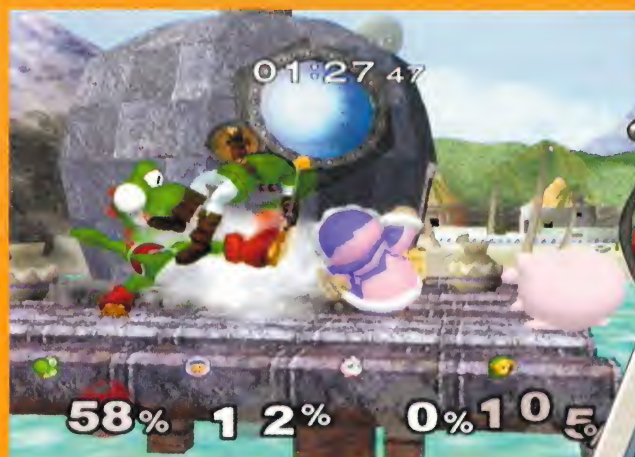
But we put it to you, the gaming public, that put side by side *Soul Calibur II* is a better fighting game, pound for pound. It feels more rounded as a fighter with a wider selection of moves and a greater degree of depth in the attacks.

When it comes to the actual breadth of each game it's a close-run thing. *Melee* has the

Event matches and the Trophies to unlock – well over 200 – whereas *Soul Calibur II* has the Weapon Master mode with over 200 new weapons to get your bloody hands on. We'll call this a draw, but out in the arena it's *Soul Calibur II* that takes the win overall.



■ There's no doubt that *Super Smash Bros. Melee* is chock full of Nintendo history. Even *Soul Calibur II* can't compete with that



■ Link's in this as well, but we reckon if it's pure fighting action you're looking for then *Soul Calibur II* is the one to watch



■ Raphael looks a bit weak, but he's the fastest swordsman in the game



■ Xianghua has a number of skimpy outfits. Our favourite is this black, secretary-type get-up



Of course, there's more to it than just hitting the buttons in the right sequence. Some attacks require the trusty 'roll away, then towards and kick' move, some need you to press more than one button. Link's weapons are a good example of this as you need to push **A** and **Y** to bring out the bow, press **Y** again to fire an arrow, hit **X** twice to throw a bomb or press **A** twice to lob the boomerang. To sit and watch somebody playing this game it looks for all the world like they are simply randomly mashing away at the buttons and making pretty sparks appear on the screen. That's *Soul Calibur II*'s party trick; it makes bad players look good, but it doesn't make a good player stand out from the crowd.

Sadly it appears that you can use the C-Stick to pull off some of the special moves as well, like in *Capcom vs. SNK EO*. We implore you right now not to succumb to this temptation as it can ruin the whole game and turn this from a complex fighter into a matter of child's play.

Like any good fighter, as you work your way through the game you'll appreciate that blocking is almost as important as attacking. In fact, guarding yourself from your opponents is essential in the latter stages of the Weapon Master mode, especially when you are fighting against several opponents in a row. One cool move is to push forward and guard just as your opponent comes at you. This causes the weapons to clash and leaves your foe vulnerable

"Soul Calibur II makes bad players look good, but it doesn't make a good player stand out."



■ Inferno is a true monster. Taller than any of the main characters, able to use any of their weapons and styles... and he's on fire

When good editors go bad!

Take a tear-stained trip down memory lane with Tim...

Christmas Day 1992 – what a day that was to have a Super NES. I'd already begged my Mum and Dad for the *Street Fighter II* pack that I'd seen down at Dixons in Southend and now I just couldn't wait to play it.

I'd read the review in *Mean Machines*, new all the names of the fighters and spent the whole of Christmas Eve talking nothing but *SFII* to my brother, Matt. I was Guile, he was Ryu. Christmas morning was gonna be cool. Fight!

But it wasn't. My Dad wanted his fry up first and then had to decipher the



instructions to get it rigged up. 11am and there was no Guile v Ryu face-off. A few choice words later though and it was game on! Then there was my one-player spat with Russian Zangief. I just couldn't hammer that Soviet sweat box into the floor. Some 17 goes later and I was a broken man, punching the wall, shouting my mouth off and slamming the unit that the Super NES sat on. My older brother told me to shut up and told my Dad, who also told me to shut up. 'I'll Sonic Boom your ass any day!' I cried. 'No you won't', my older brother Steve shouted back. He had *Super Tennis* in his hand and there would be no eighteenth *SFII* face-off until Boxing Day.





to a quick attack. Learn this move and use it wisely.

Finally, after you've exhausted every mode, completed every scenario, unlocked every art gallery, extra arena and fighter there's still the two-player game to get stuck in to and no amount of modes and options can really compare to getting a gang of mates around for the night, stocking up the fridge and embarking on a mammoth winner-stays-on session.

What more can you say? This is what good fighting games are all about. *Soul Calibur II* is super fast, it looks fantastic – as good as any game currently available – and it plays like a dream. Even if you only played the standard Arcade mode you'd still be a satisfied gamer, happy in the knowledge that you are playing the best.

On the downside this is initially too easy and remains so for a good few hours, you'll definitely need to stick with it if you want to get the best out of the game. We found that on some of the Weapon Master matches it was possible to progress past five opponents in

a row with very little health recharge simply by walking back from the opposition and pressing **A** when they moved in to attack. It's a rare occurrence to be sure, but it's just enough to make you stop and think that it may all be a big con. It's great to see that Link is good and doesn't look weak compared to the other characters, but it's a shame that he sometimes feels too good with the vast array of weapons that he possesses. And no doubt the sight of a fully 3D adult Link will start up the whole cel-shaded versus realistic argument again.

But you'll have to go through *Soul Calibur II* with a fine-toothed comb if you want to find any big errors. If all you've got to complain about is that you have to play a really good game for a couple of hours, listen to an over-the-top voice-over and make do with a legendary Nintendo character that's a little too good then you're a real nitpicker. You've waited a long time for a beat-'em-up as good as this, now it's time to claim the prize. **Dominic**

“If you only play Arcade mode you'll still be a satisfied gamer – you're playing the best.”

Link learns to fight?

Okay, he's always known how to mix it, but in *SCII*, Link gets even more tasty

■ You'd think that the Link in *Soul Calibur II* is the same as the young Hyrulian has always been. But a quick look through the annals of gaming history reveals that Link's skills have come some way since he first appeared on the screen.



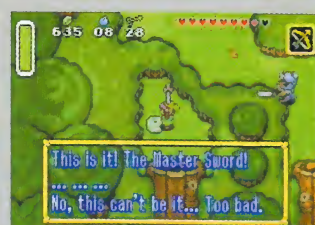
■ The Legend of Zelda

When Link set out on his first adventure, all he could do was thrust his sword. He should have had 'L' plates on his back just to let the enemies know to go easy on him.



■ The Adventure of Link

The view switched to side-on for this second, weaker, adventure and RPG elements were introduced. It didn't really work, but at least Link learned how to attack above and below. That's more like it.



■ A Link to the Past

A return to the top-down view and a more grown-up, mature Link emerged from his little cottage. Now he had mastered the power of the Whirling Blade attack. Enemies trembled in his presence.



■ Ocarina of Time

The education seemed complete. Slashing and hacking came as standard, but here was an adventurer confident in his abilities with overhead attacks and cheeky roll manoeuvres.



■ The Wind Waker

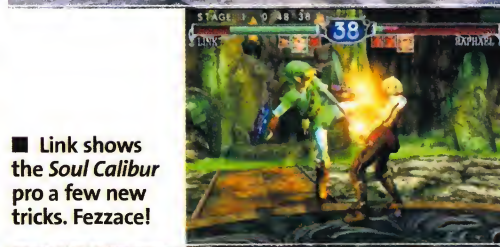
Just when you thought Link couldn't advance any further, along came the 'roll and slash' move, ideal for removing Darknut armour. Is Link done learning? We reckon there's still more to come.



■ Have that in your mouth!



■ Nightmare wields the single-bladed Soul Edge



■ Link shows the Soul Calibur pro a few new tricks. Fezzace!



■ That banner can't be much help in a fight



■ In Weapon Master mode, this floor is deadly

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You've been waiting for a kick-ass brawler since you finished *Street Fighter II*.

No if...

You like to mash the buttons until you win. This requires patience, awareness and skill.

You'll love it if you like...

Any decent technical fighting game from the past ten years. Wrestling fans steer clear.

GRAPHICS

10

Great big characters, lush backgrounds, sweet lighting effects. Divine.

SOUND

9

The only letdown is the dramatic voice-over. Everything else is perfect.

GAMEPLAY

9

Takes time to learn and ages to master. *Soul Calibur II* feels instantly familiar.

LIFE SPAN

30 HOURS

That's to unlock everything, but the sheer depth will keep you playing.

VERDICT

It feels like a huge, fighting game-shaped gap has been filled. This is fighting at its best. Weapon Master mode will make a man of you and the depth in other areas will keep you coming back time and again.



BEST BIT: Weapon Master mode really gets the adrenaline pumping.

WORST BIT: For the first two hours it's easy. You'll need to stick with it.

SECOND OPINION

> I like brutal games. They're fun. Not only is *Soul Calibur II* the best fighting game I've ever played, it has got some of the most kick-ass moves in any fighter. Mike

NOM UK'S RATING

94%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

What We Know

All the Nintendo news you need

Don't believe the hype!

NOM UK cuts through the crap about GameCube and finds the machine in fantastic health and heading for its best Christmas yet.



OH NO!

NO MORE 'CUBES

"I heard that Nintendo isn't making any more GameCubes. Does that mean that GameCube is dead and that Nintendo isn't supporting it any more?"

DON'T WORRY! Production of GameCubes has only been suspended. Nintendo has enough 'Cubes in storage to meet demand right now and there's nothing to say that they won't start cranking them out again soon.

CHEAP AS CHIPS

"I heard that GameCube is selling so badly that Nintendo is having to cut prices everywhere to shift units."

DON'T WORRY! The retail price of a GameCube has dropped to \$99 in the US. That's bound to get anyone thinking about buying a GameCube into the shops. Would you really prefer it if prices were high? We just hope this means some sort of UK price-cut so more gamers can play *Metroid Prime* and *The Wind Waker*.

ANIMAL CROSSING

"I heard that *Animal Crossing* is coming out in Australia, but not the UK - despite both being English-speaking, PAL territories."

DON'T WORRY! All's not lost yet. If you and your mates sign our petition on p25 we might still force them to change their minds. As a back-up plan, start checking if you have relatives who live over there!

OH YES!

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Think support for your beloved GameCube is disappearing? Think again! Just check out this list of quality titles out in time for Christmas and start wondering how the hell you're going to afford it all:

- *Soul Calibur II*, September 26th
- *F-Zero GX*, October 31st
- *Viewtiful Joe*, October 31st
- *Star Wars Rebel Strike: Rogue Squadron III*, November 7th
- *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*, November 14th
- *Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg*, November 21st
- *1080° Avalanche*, November 28th
- *Pikmin 2*, November 28th
- *Mario Party 5*, December 5th

Feeling wealthy? And that's not mentioning the usual festive slew from Electronic Arts: *FIFA 2004*, *Harry Potter*, *James Bond* and *Lord of the Rings*...

GAMECUBE 2

Yep, it's definitely happening. Says who? Says Satoru Iwata, that's who - Nintendo's big boss at a press conference in August. The release date is still sketchy - 2005 or 2006 - but it proves Nintendo is still very committed to the home console market

IT'S PAY-BACK TIME!

New in Japan is a Nintendo loyalty scheme that lets you spend credits you earn buying games and hardware on exclusive Nintendo products and merchandise. It's sort of like the VIP Stars system we have in the UK, but with better rewards that you get more often. So, not just a *Star Fox* screensaver, then. Providing the scheme is successful in Japan (and why wouldn't it be? Everyone loves free stuff!) you can expect to see it rolled out here as well.

Your GBA wish-list

Unsurprisingly, the Game Boy Advance line-up is also very strong in the run-up to Christmas. Rare's much-delayed *Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge* is due in October, but here are a few confirmed dates you should definitely warn your bank manager/parents about:

- *Golden Sun: The Lost Age* September 19th
- *Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land* September 26th
- *Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising* October 3rd
- *Super Mario Bros. 3: Super Mario Advance 4* October 17th
- *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* October 24th
- *Top Gear Rally* November 7th
- *Pokémon Pinball: Ruby and Sapphire* November 14th
- *Mario and Luigi: Superstar Saga* November 21st

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

CREDIT KEVIN GIFFORD

■ Owing to a printing error last issue, the excellent Miyamoto lecture transcript wasn't properly credited. The man behind it was Kevin Gifford, of the Japanese games culture website Video Fenky. Check out more of Kevin's fantastic work at www.video-fenky.com

BILLY'S BONUS

■ The word from Sega Japan is that the forthcoming GameCube game *Billy Hatcher* will include up to four downloadable GBA games. Sega Europe was in a big hurry to deny it, but the talk suggests a return for the Sega Saturn classic *NIGHTS*, along with puzzlers *Chu-Chu Rocket* and *Puyo Pop*.



DYACK DENIAL

■ Somewhere deep within the internet, the rumour was born that the 'Twin' in *Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes* meant that the PS2 game *Metal Gear Solid 2* was also being converted. Well, we contacted Denis Dyack at Silicon Knights and he flatly denied it. So that's that.

IT KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE

■ *Boktai*, it seems, is setting a trend for handheld innovation. Rumoured to be on the slate for next year is a GBA game making use of GPS technology. The Global Position System is used in navigation as it pinpoints your exact position on the Earth's surface. Interesting...

GBA 2: 2004?

■ Development sources have told *NOM UK* that they're expecting to take delivery of development kits for the Game Boy Advance's successor before Christmas. The technology is all but finalised, so this gives developers time to ready titles for a predicted 2004 launch.

ANOTHER SAMUS GONG

■ As the Edinburgh International Games Festival closed at the end of August, the awards were handed out. The International Award for Excellence and Innovation went to the awesome *Metroid Prime*, just in case you were still looking for a reason to buy it.



The Nintendo effect

Nintendo and Mario Kart rule at ECTS.

Forget booths, they're for normal companies. Nintendo don't like to blend in. They like to be noticed, to be special, to be different. Nintendo didn't want a booth in the ECTS show – they wanted a truck... and that's what they had.

Nintendo stuck a ma-hoosive 40-ton articulated truck right outside the entrance to the show, holding 48 consoles all loaded with their best up-and-coming games. Playable titles included an updated version of *Mario Kart: Double Dash*, *1080° Avalanche*, *F-Zero GX*, *Pikmin 2*, *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*, *Pac-man* and *Soul Calibur II*.

Not satisfied with that, Nintendo set up four full-size go-karts, each with a screen and loaded with *Mario Kart* in multiplayer LAN mode. There was also one huge screen behind the karts to show onlookers what was happening in the game. Jolly good show, Nintendo!

The big N also walked away with the ECTS award for best Handheld Game of the Show with *Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising*. Too right 'n' all.



Can anyone spot NOM UK's Rich Marsh in this snap – he's the one with the crazy eyes



THQ publish Rare games

Last month we reported that our previous best friends, Rare, were still set to release games for the GBA, but were in the process of trying to find a publisher for the titles.

Well, the good news is that the deal is done and you can look forward to playing the games soon. THQ now has worldwide rights to publish Rare's GBA projects, which include *Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge* and *Sabrewulf*. The company will

also be doing *Banjo Pilot*, previously known as *Diddy Kong Pilot*. *Banjo Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge* is due to hit shops before Christmas.



1080° gets LAN

Eight-player snowball fights are on the menu for *1080° Avalanche*.

Nintendo has announced that *1080° Avalanche* will be joining *Mario Kart: Double Dash* and *Kirby's Air Ride* on the list of LAN-compatible Nintendo games to hit the GameCube in the near future. What this means is it's time for full massive multiplayer battles.

A maximum of eight players will be able to face-off in huge downhill races. The question is: do you have seven friends, each with a GameCube, a broadband adapter and a telly that they'd be willing to lug over to your gaff? You've got until November to find some...



Time to take action

e-Reader delayed and cruel *Animal Crossing* mockery. We feel a petition coming on...

THE GOOD NEWS

Nintendo has quashed rumours that its UK-headed consignment of e-Readers have been torpedoed in the Atlantic by a bunch of Yanks who don't want us to play with the same toys as them. The big N blames a medical condition called "slippage" and says the launch has been "moved to the first half of 2004, as our focus for the remainder of 2003 is the strong software release schedule for GameCube and GBA." All's well that ends well, then...



THE BAD NEWS

Australia, a nation hopelessly devoted to archaic sports and hating its betters (us), will soon be laughing all over their fat, sunburnt faces with the news that our most-wanted RPG/life sim, *Animal Crossing*, is to hit their miserable shores and not ours. And to add insult to injury, Australia is a PAL region, meaning the only thing now stopping you from getting a UK copy is Nintendo's assertion its American content is "undesirable to European gamers". Ummm...



PETITION

for the release of *Animal Crossing* in the UK

We the undersigned are sick to the back teeth of having our loyalty trampled. We want parity with our backward Australian cousins. We demand *Animal Crossing* for Europe NOW, or there'll be big trouble, like.

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Send your completed petitions to us at the usual address and we'll pass them on. Come on! You know this is something you care passionately about!

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

NO METAL GEAR GBA

■ Speaking exclusively to *NOM UK* in an interview to be published next issue, Hideo Kojima, the creator of *Metal Gear*, let slip an interesting snippet about the upcoming *Twin Snakes*. The much-vaunted GBA connectivity in that title has now been dropped completely. More next month.



SYMPHONIA SELLS OUT

■ Namco's GameCube RPG *Tales of Symphonia* has made an impressive Japanese debut, selling a massive 204,538 copies on day one. Our sources in Tokyo tell us the queues were even longer than for *F-Zero GX*'s release. Square's GBA RPG, *Sword of Mana*, shifted 87,491 copies on the same day.

MARIO KART: ONLINE

■ Well, not officially. Some clever kids have networked their GameCubes up to their home PCs and are playing LAN games online by fooling the GameCube with a super-fast internet connection. So far, they've got *Kirby's Air Ride* working, but *Mario Kart* will be the big test. We'll keep you informed as to what's happening.



BID FOR A GAME

■ If you're just too plain stupid to decipher eBay, a new video games-only auction site has just launched at www.bidforagame.com. When we checked at press time it was pretty barren (only THREE Super NES games listed), but it might get better, we suppose.

UN-DEAD PHOENIX

■ Rising like, well, a phoenix from the ashes, Capcom's GameCube shooter *Dead Phoenix* hasn't been cancelled as everyone thought. Speaking at ECTS, producer Atsushi Inaba denied the game's demise and said the project was still on track. We just hope it's better than *P.N.03*.

MISSING MOUSTACHE FOUND

■ We bought a fake muzzie for Winty to wear in our *Final Fantasy*:

Crystal Chronicles photo shoot, but then it got lost and we couldn't find it anywhere. It has since turned up in the no-man's land between the desks of Tim and Mark, and has been safely stowed away for 'hilarious' future use. Be prepared for mirth at any time.



Nintendo[®] Know -it-all

It's gamers versus developers every month.



BENNY BROOKE, 16, HARDCORE GAMER



LES ELLIS, 420, PRODUCER, FLIGHT OF THE FALCON

NAME THE TWO LEGEND OF ZELDA ORACLE GAMES FOR GAME BOY COLOR.

"Whoa. Umm. I do know this actually. Oracle of Ages and Oracle of Seasons."
We're surprised. Not that you got it right, but at your hair. Dude, it's unruly. **(1)**

"Easy. Seasons and Ages."

We suppose the eternal undead have a lot of time to play Game Boy. **(1)**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU FINISH MODE B ON GAME BOY TETRIS ON THE HARDEST LEVEL?

"I was only about six when it came out! I dunno. The game... ends?"
You've been a fool, Brooke. The Space Shuttle takes off. It's a beautiful time. **(0)**

"You're kidding me, right? Isn't that just a bit too obscure?"
Well, WE know Ellis. That's why we asked. But you clearly don't. **(0)**

HOW ARE THE CHARACTERS IGGY, LEMMY AND WENDY CONNECTED?

"Err... they all have the same birth mother?"
What are you saying, Brooke? That's information you can't possibly know. Wrong. **(0)**

"They are all... Koopalings from Super Mario World?"
Ha! It's good, but it's not right. They're the Koopas in Super Mario Bros. 3. **(0)**

WAS GBA SP THE FIRST NINTENDO HANDHELD TO HAVE AN INTERNAL LIGHT?

"Um... no it wasn't. Okay, it's a guess."
But you're right. There was a lit version of the Game Boy Pocket released in Japan. As if you ever really knew. **(1)**

"That can't be right. One of the Game and Watches must have had one."
Well, they may have. We haven't all been alive for hundreds of years, you know. **(1)**

NAME FOUR SUPER NES GAMES THAT USED THE INFAMOUS 'SUPER FX CHIP'.

"I never had a Super NES. I had a Master System. Star Fox for certain, but, err, Pilot Wings and Mario World?"
Benny. We like you, but you disgust us. No Super NES? What the hell is wrong with you man? **(0)**

"Stunt Race FX, Dirt Trax FX... umm, what other FXs are there? Oh, Yoshi's Island and Star Wing."
You only know because you reviewed them, dude. That's almost cheating. **(1)**

WHO IS GABBY JAY?

"Doesn't sound even vaguely familiar."
That's because you denied the one true god, the Super NES. He's out of Super Punch-Out!! – he's a complete wuss. **(0)**

"He's the guy out of Punch-Out. The Super NES one. I loved that game"
But were you any good at it? Or did the old man weakling Jay smack you up? **(1)**

WHICH CHARACTER SHOWS UP WHEN YOU GRAB ALL 120 STARS ON MARIO 64?

"I know that. It's Yoshi."
We made these questions 'nuff difficult this time. But not that one. **(1)**

"I was going to say Yoshi..."
Well, good, because that's easy. **(1)**

NAME THE THREE PENDANTS YOU NEED TO GET IN ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST.

I didn't play it all the way through. I'll guess. Pendant of Light? Pendant of Love? Pendant of...
We'll stop you there, it's getting embarrassing. It's Power, Courage and Wisdom. **(0)**

"The Pendant of Nobody Can Possibly Know. That's a stupid question."
Dude, you got it wrong. You should point the stupid stick at yourself. **(0)**

WHERE DOES MARIO APPEAR IN ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME?

"He's not in it. No, wait! A picture on a wall? NO! A STAINED GLASS WINDOW. THAT'S IT!"
Alright Benny, keep your hair on. But well spotted nonetheless through your light-stopping mane. **(1)**

"It must be in some kind of sub-game. Although I don't remember playing it."
That's because it wasn't there. Play it through again with some glasses on. **(0)**

HOW MANY TROPHIES ARE THERE IN SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE?

"Something like 270? I haven't sat and counted."
We'd have given it to you if you were within 10. But you weren't. **(0)**

"It's something like 290, isn't it?"
GET OFF THE INTERNET, ELLIS! Well, we can't prove he cheated we suppose... **(1)**

FINAL SCORE

5

Benny arrived on work experience and left a broken man. With tough questions that's a decent try.

6

Ellis used to be a games journalist, so he should know. Flight of the Falcon is out soon. He says it's cool.

He bangs the drum

The Donkey Kong clan prepare to take a whole new direction as Namco begins development on a crazy rhythm-action title.

Satoru Iwata, president of Nintendo, recently confirmed that Namco are working on a new Donkey Kong title. The imaginatively titled *Donkey Konga* sees players thumping the tubs with DK and the family in time to a selection of funky tracks.

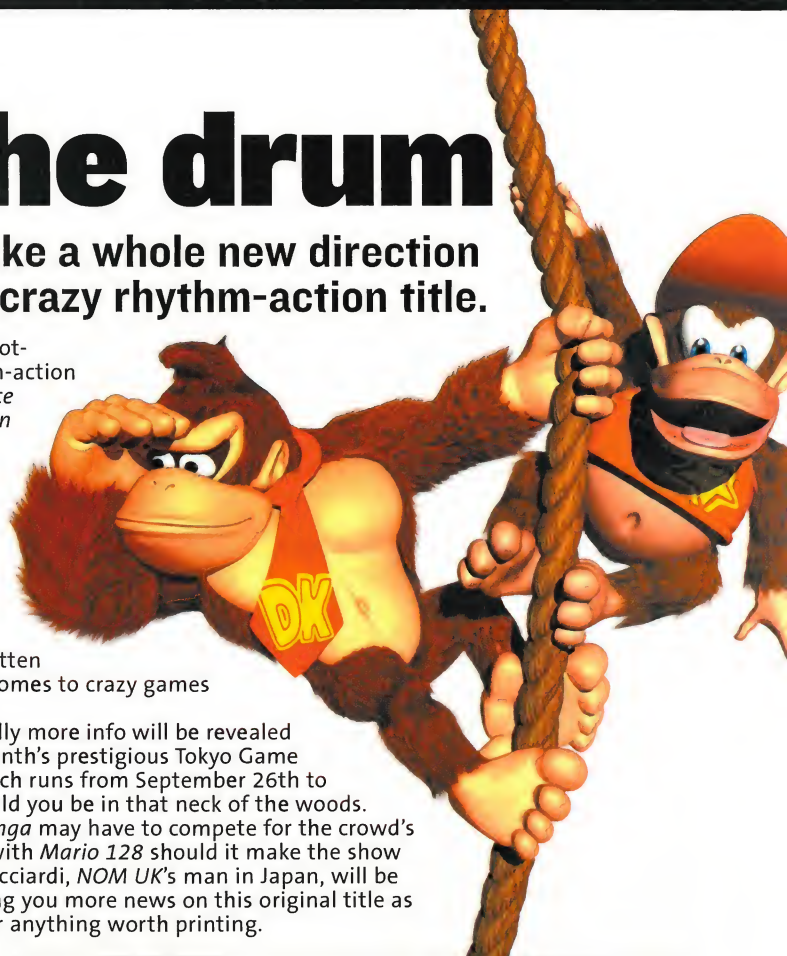
The title should follow in the footsteps of Namco's own *Taiko No Tatsujin* game on PS2, which comes packaged with a cool drum peripheral and large plastic drumsticks. In *Taiko No Tatsujin* players have to hit the drum skin or the outer rim in time, according to the instructions on screen.

Namco hasn't yet confirmed whether *Donkey Konga* will require a drum peripheral to play, but based on the company's previous form, we reckon it's an absolute certainty.



But fans of foot-tapping, rhythm-action games like *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Samba De Amigo* should keep their fingers well and truly crossed for a UK release as we often tend to get forgotten when it comes to crazy games like this.

Hopefully more info will be revealed at this month's prestigious Tokyo Game Show, which runs from September 26th to 28th, should you be in that neck of the woods. *Donkey Konga* may have to compete for the crowd's attention with *Mario 128* should it make the show and John Ricciardi, *NOM UK*'s man in Japan, will be there. We'll bring you more news on this original title as soon as we hear anything worth printing.



Up and running

NOM UK has gone live. Now that's a website for sore eyes!

Our website is finally working. Don't believe us? Go check out www.nintendomagazine.co.uk now and see for yourself. Ha! In your face, *NOM UK* doubters.

Seriously though, we know it has been a long time since we promised it would be online, but we're finally there, after 18 months of struggle and toil, and hundreds of emails asking where it had got to.

So once you've finished with the magazine you can carry on getting all the Nintendo news, previews, reviews, tips, cheats, interviews, features and forums all with the magical tool we like to call the interweb.



Use the web, Luke

Pre-order freebie for 'Cube.

If you're a *Star Wars* fan salivating at the prospect of *Rebel Strike* then wait until you get a load of this: if you pre-order a copy of *Star Wars Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike* from Game's website (www.game.uk.com, £29.99) you'll receive a bonus disc featuring the classic 1982 *Star Wars* arcade game. It still ranks as one of the best *Star Wars* games ever. Feel the Force!

The disc also contains playable demos from the Hoth level from *Rebel Strike*, LucasArts' RPG *Gladius* and *Rogue Leader*. There's also a *Rogue Leader* trailer and more bonus materials than you can shake a lightsaber at. Good news indeed.

On a similar, bonus-disc related topic we can confirm that *Mario Kart: Double Dash* will NOT come with a version of *Mario Kart 64*. Turn to p51 to find out more on this sad, sad news.

> What's your earliest gaming memory?

Actually, when I joined Nintendo they were not, for example, producing family computers yet. When I arrived it was at the time when many people were playing the *Donkey Kong* arcade game. In Japan at least, there was a *Space Invaders* boom and afterwards we had several arcade titles, including *Donkey Kong*. Because of that I don't have any particular memories of arcade games, apart from Nintendo's.

> What was the first games system you ever owned?

The Famicom [the Japanese machine that became the NES for Europe and the US].

> What was the first Nintendo game you ever played?

It was the *Donkey Kong* arcade game.

> What is your favourite game ever?

Super Metroid.

> What existing game do you most wish you'd created?

It's not the characters that appear in the game, but the gameplay of *Pokémon* really, really impresses me. The creator was a genius who connected his old memories of playing with and collecting insects in his childhood days and then made a tremendous game out of them. *Pokémon* is very impressive.

> Who is the best games character ever?

Can I include Samus Aran in my answer? After all, I was deeply involved in the creation of the first *Metroid* game, so Samus has a strong position in my mind.

And if I can add another one, it has to be the Mario character. Mario appeared in *Super Mario Bros.* and that was a revolutionary video game for me.



We tried to snap Sakamoto-san, but his mum kept getting in the way, trying to clean the lens

GAMING LIVES

Yoshio Sakamoto

JOB: Manager of Research and Development Dept No. 1, Nintendo of Japan

CURRENTLY WORKING ON: The follow up to *Metroid Fusion*, the cunningly titled, *Metroid: Zero Mission* and a GameCube version of *Wario Ware Inc.*

PREVIOUS GAMES: *Gum Shoe* (NES), *Super Metroid* (Super NES) and *Metroid Fusion* (GBA)

> What was the last game you managed to complete?

I'm sorry, but personally I really don't have enough time to play with any video games right now. But for work I am once again playing *Metroid Prime*. It's homework, really. Does that count?

> What Nintendo game are you most looking forward to?

I am looking forward to the launch of *Metroid Prime 2* and *Metroid: Zero Mission*. When we made *Metroid Fusion* we put the emphasis more on the scenario and it was kind of a new challenge. And in the case of *Metroid: Zero Mission* we really wanted to go back to basics. In other words, to

prioritise the exploration in the gameplay. It's a new challenge once again and I'm looking forward to seeing *Metroid: Zero Mission* accepted by gamers.

> Who would win in a fight between Mario and Sonic, and why?

Ahh, probably Sonic would win if it was a 100m running match. But if Mario and Sonic were to physically engage in a fist fight or in a battle I think Mario has the advantage. After all, Mario has much more skill and art at fighting.

> What special weapon or ability would you give Mario in *Mario 128*?

Hmm... maybe a human pyramid ability?

Grab a *bargain!*

Crazy shop owners will do anything to get your custom – this month we've found these ludicrous offers.

GAMECUBE

www.amazon.co.uk

Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem

£19.99

Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II

£10.99

www.simplygames.com

Burnout

£19.99

Resident Evil

£14.99

www.woolworths.co.uk

Super Monkey Ball

£19.99

WWE Wrestlemania X8

£13.29

www.gameplay.co.uk

Mario Party 4

£24.99

GAME BOY ADVANCE

www.amazon.co.uk

Super Streetfighter II Turbo Revival

£11.98

kuru kuru kururin

£6.99

www.simplygames.co.uk

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

£19.99

Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow

£24.99

www.woolworths.co.uk

GT Advance

£12.99

Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3

£19.99

www.gameplay.co.uk

Zelda: Oracle of Ages with free Oracle of Seasons

£24.99

BECOME A LEGEND



"...the wrestling game to die for..."
Nintendo Official Magazine
May 2003

"...yet another smash-hit WWE title..."
C&VG — June 2003

WRESTLEMANIA[®] XIX

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Big in Japan

NOM UK's John Ricciardi has a hat full of sushi-fresh Nintendo factoids to destroy your westernised brain.

MAGAZINE MADNESS

With dozens of new games released every week, it's no surprise that Japan is home to loads of games mags, many of which are published weekly or biweekly. Here's a look at some of the best...

NINTENDO DREAM

Visually impressive, *Nintendo Dream* (or *Nin-dori*) is often first with breaking news thanks to being a biweekly. It also has Q&As with answers from Nintendo of Japan staff.



FAMITSU CUBE + ADVANCE

A Nintendo-only version of Japan's #1 games mag, *Weekly Famitsu*, this offers a comprehensive review section covering almost every GC and GBA game that makes it into stores.



DENGEKI GAMECUBE

Dengeki usually gives big coverage to a select few games (often RPGs and strategy titles), which is one of the reasons why it's so popular among Japan's hardcore gamers.



NINTENDO KIDS

Manga or anime licensed games often get big coverage here, as does anything with the words 'Pokémon' or 'Mega Man' in the title. And for a 'kids' mag, the content is surprisingly solid.



F-ZERO GOES LIVE



Japanese *F-Zero* fans are in for a treat this October with the launch of a new animated series based on the games, *F-Zero: Falcon Densetsu*. Series creator, Takaya Imamura and the legendary Miyamoto will provide supervision for the anime, which is just the latest in a series of Nintendo-sponsored shows, including *Kirby*, *Hamtaro* and *Pokémon*.

Several licensees have already jumped on the *F-Zero* bandwagon, promising a wealth of related products, including toys, pencil sets and even a new comic series.

But perhaps best of all, Nintendo has confirmed that at least one new *F-Zero* game is in the works as well. If it's anywhere near as fast and as fun as *F-Zero GX*, we're all in for a treat...

TRIFORCE SPOTTED IN JAPAN!

Our man in Japan stumbled upon the greatest Nintendo treasures of all a few weeks ago while exploring a 750-year-old temple in Kamakura: the fabled Triforce from the *Zelda* series. Okay, maybe it's not the Triforce, but it was quite inspiring to see the symbol plastered all over the walls of one of Japan's biggest temples. Could Miyamoto have found inspiration for the Triforce from a place like this?



MARIO & ZELDA ROCK THE HOUSE

On September 14th, Nintendo fans in Tokyo will be rockin' out to the tunes of *Mario* and *Zelda* at 'Mario & Zelda: Big Band Live' – a Nintendo-sponsored concert celebrating the music from its two most-successful franchises. The Tokyo Cuban Boys Jr. (Big Band of Rogues) and Yoshihiro Arita will be there to perform jazz and latin-based versions of the classic tunes and Nintendo bigwigs Miyamoto, Takashi Tezuka, Koji Kondo and others will be on-hand for a panel discussion. Let's hope they don't encore with the DK Rap.



JAPAN TOP TEN

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending August 3rd

1	<i>Tales of Phantasia</i>	(Namco, GBA)
2	<i>Pokémon Pinball: Ruby and Sapphire</i>	(Nintendo, GBA)
3	<i>Super Mario Advance 4</i>	(Nintendo, GBA)
4	<i>Kirby's Air Ride</i>	(Nintendo, GC)
5	<i>F-Zero GX</i>	(Nintendo, GC)
6	<i>Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire</i>	(Nintendo, GBA)
7	<i>Corokke! 2: Yami no Bank to Bun Joou</i>	(Konami, GBA)
8	<i>Animal Crossing e+</i>	(Nintendo, GC)
9	<i>Boktai</i>	(Konami, GBA)
10	<i>Mother 1+2</i>	(Nintendo, GBA)

IF YOU CAN'T DO THE TIME...

AT CINEMAS
NATIONWIDE NOW!

THE ITALIAN JOB™

L.A. HEIST

Who needs pavement when you're behind the wheel of a souped-up Mini Cooper? Tear through subway stations, across golf courses, and in storm drains as you and your band of thieves pull off the ultimate gold heist.

WWW.ITALIANJOBGAME.COM



A high-octane arcade racer
based on the blockbuster movie



Race through L.A.
driving 10 different vehicles



Bonus features including
movie footage, interviews, and more!



Master 4 modes from death-defying
stunt driving to multiplayer madness



CLIMAX



eidos
www.eidos.com

OUT NOW

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Hardware

**GAMES ARE SOFTWARE.
THIS IS ALL THE
STUFF THAT ISN'T**

PYRAMAT

We got sent a mat with some built-in speakers. You lie on it to play your games and it rumbles as bass pumps out near your ears. We struggled to see the point of it, then we found out it cost £150 and laughed so hard we were hospitalised.

1 Jackson is our resident noise mat tester. He's trained in such operations. Here he is wondering how to unfold the damn thing.



2 The sound quality is alright, but it has to be ear-shatteringly loud to get any decent amount of rumble going. Jackson despairs at the impracticality.



3 Realising he's getting paid just to lie down, Jackson starts to like it. This is before we tell him how much this ridiculous thing costs...



4 Oh no! Jackson says he'd rather be dead than pay £150 for this from www.widget.co.uk. It is, we think, one of the least useful devices ever.



GAME TOY!

Bringing you the best in game-related toys from around the world.

POKÉMOTION

NOM UK heard about this crazy LED toy last month, so we had to get one in for a look. You use buttons to dial in the number of the Pokémon you want to see, then shake it and your chosen critter magically appears in the air! It's the coolest thing ever**. Check out our Pokémon!

WHERE TO GET IT: Online stockists of bizarre stuff will have it. Try www.play-asia.com



RESPECT OUR JIGGLYPUFF!
You know you need one of these



Treecko lives!
We have the pic to prove it



You need an LED Psyduck in your life

TESTED TO DESTRUCTION!

YOU WANT IT!

SOUL CALIBUR II STICK, £35 (approx)

The arcade version of *Soul Calibur II* doesn't have a small pad hanging off it on a wire, because that's not the best way to play it. This is – it's a cracking Japanese arcade stick. The US is getting one too, so cross your fingers. Or pick one up on your holidays.



UMM... MAYBE

GBA JUKEBOX, £99

It makes your Game Boy Advance into an mp3 player. Or, more accurately, it uses your GBA screen to let you know what tracks you're playing. We think a hundred notes is a bit steep to hear Celine Dion on your GBA – especially as you'll only fit eight or so tracks in its puny 32Mbyte memory. Go for an iPod, if you're minted.



WHAT'S THE POINT?!

JOYTECH EARPHONES, £6.99

Whoops! Nintendo forgot to put an earphone adaptor on the GBA SP.

It's so embarrassing when that happens. But Joytech have rustled up this earphone adaptor maker. Whoops again! The supplied earphones are absolute crap and it sounds like you're listening to someone playing loud music next door. Oh dear...

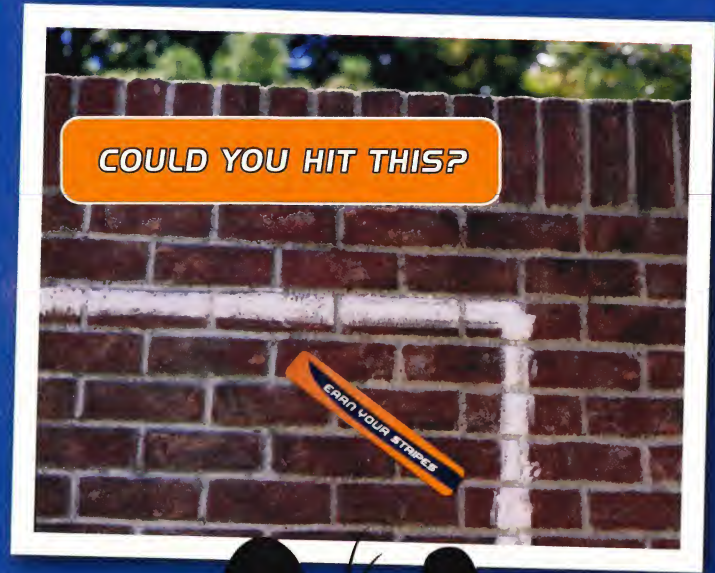


REAL MONKEY BALLS

The monkeys aren't real – that would be cruel. But they are just like the game ones, only you can hold them in your hand. Or throw them at the cat with AiAi deploying on impact. Pow! In your face, cat! Hopefully the cat doesn't then pee on your AiAi.

Where to get 'em:
At your local comic shop, import store, or online.





Think you're up for these challenges?
Good, get out there and prove it.
Leap higher, jump further, run faster.

Kellogg's
FROSTIES

EARN YOUR STRIPES

YOUR SHOUT

The NOM Survey

Poké past sell-by date

We asked: Has good old Pokémania sucked you in all over again this time around?

POLL RESULT

YES 23%
NO 77%

■ I liked the gameplay in the original *Pokémon* games because then, it was original. But *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* are just basically *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* with a face-lift.

Jonathan Kinghorn

■ I thought I'd be addicted again. I was hooked on *Red* and *Gold* but I got *Pokémon Sapphire* and I felt like I had to force myself to get eight Gym Badges and beat the Elite Four.

Franklin Hughes

■ I bought *Pokémon Sapphire* on holiday and it was good, but there's nothing quite like the original, or the feeling I got when I first chose my Charmander.

Richard Brown

■ Pokémania has totally sucked me in. I can't put the blighters down! The games are sure to keep me busy on the plane when I go on holiday soon.

Anthony Hobson

F-Zero GX takes poll position

We asked: Is there a 'Cube racer you want more than *F-Zero GX*?

■ *F-Zero GX* may be too fast for some, but it looks fantastic with totally unique graphics and shocking speed.

Luke Kozakewycz

■ There is no GameCube racer I want more than *F-Zero GX*. Its older brothers left me speechless and now that it's coming to GameCube it'll be better than any other racer ever.

Jonathan Kinghorn

■ Of course *F-Zero GX* is going to be great, but I would rather be playing *Mario Kart: Double Dash*. The last one was great and this one looks even better.

Chris King



■ *F-Zero GX* is looking like the adrenaline-pumped, supersonic, totally awesome racer I've always wanted. I'm convinced not even *Mario Kart: Double Dash* can top this one.

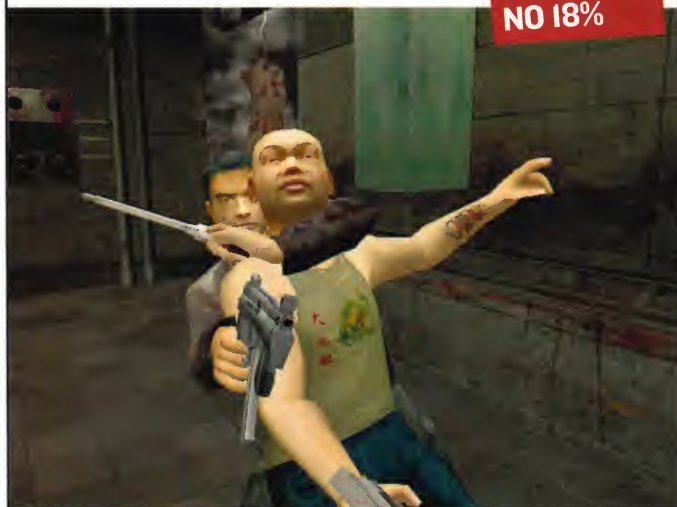
Alec Stone

True Crime is the true king!

We asked: Does *True Crime* look like a better game than *GTA*?

POLL RESULT

YES 82%
NO 18%



■ *True Crime* looks much better than *GTA* in the graphics and gameplay department. *GTA* got far too repetitive and to get anywhere in the game you had to keep doing the missions until you completed it.

Jonathan Kinghorn

■ *True Crime* looks amazing. The graphics are brilliant and the action looks tremendous. It looks like there's a far greater choice of moves than there is in *GTA*. Pure genius.

Tom Yorke

■ *True Crime* doesn't really look that special to me. It just looks like one of those games which gets a lot of hype, but ends up just being average just like *Enter the Matrix*.

Marco Ricci

■ I'm not sure at the moment. I'll have to play it for myself to know for sure. It looks like it could be a winner though.

Anthony Hobson

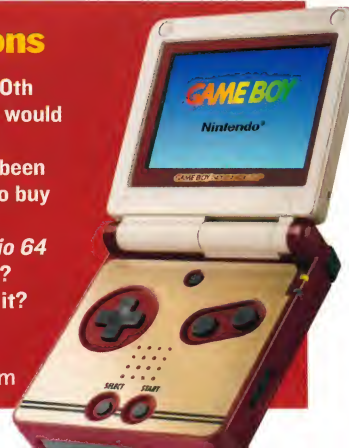
This month's questions

■ If Nintendo were to release the 20th Anniversary Famicom SP in the UK, would you want one?

■ Now that the e-Card Reader has been confirmed for Europe, do you plan to buy it, or are you not interested at all?

■ Would you like to see *Super Mario 64* come to GameCube on a bonus disc? Or are you mad enough not to want it?

Email your answers and a brief comment to: dean.scott@emap.com

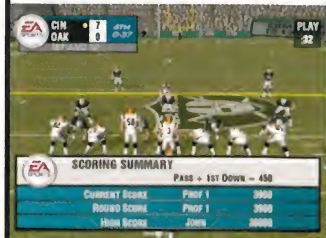


Sept 7th – Oct 18th Play Radar

What's gonna rock your world between now and then?

Sep 12th

Attention all you Gridiron fans, it's time to get the war paint out and dress up like a sofa as *Madden NFL 2004* on GameCube hits the shop shelves. Touchdown!



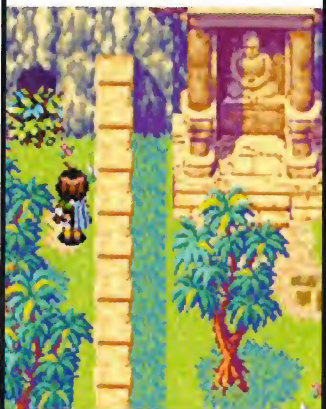
Sep 16th

Europe's big guns come out to play tonight as the Champions League group stages start today. More matches tomorrow.



Sep 19th

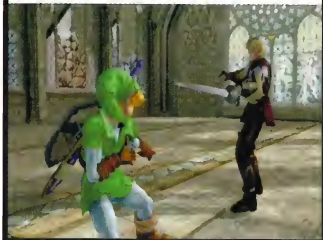
You've waited long enough and now it's finally here; *The Lost Age* is released at long last. If RPGs aren't your style then go and see *The Italian Job* at the cinema. Will it be better than the game? The chances are slim.



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18

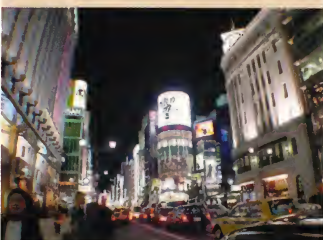
Sep 26th

What a momentous day for games. *Soul Calibur II* sees a European release and *Tiger* tees off on GameCube.



Sep 26th (cont.)

The annual Tokyo Games Show kicks off in Japan today and goes on until Sunday. What surprises will Nintendo spring on us this time? *Mario 128* anyone?

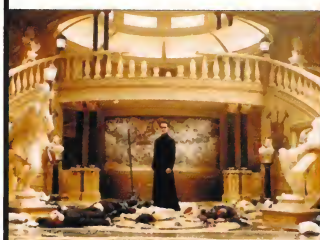


Oct 3rd

Today another instant Nintendo Game Boy Advance classic hits the high street – *Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising*. Check the review on p86. It might also be worth celebrating German Unification day, but only if you're German that is.

Oct 10th

No games to buy today, but there are some films which you may be interested in splashing out on. *The Matrix Reloaded* is out to buy on DVD – it's not as good as the first by the way – and the Disney/Pixar flick *Finding Nemo* finally comes to cinemas nationwide. It has to be better than the game!



Oct 11th

England travel to Turkey for their final Euro 2004 qualification game. Elsewhere, Wales take on Yugoslavia, Scotland entertain Lithuania, Northern Ireland take a trip to Greece and the Republic of Ireland try their luck over in Switzerland.



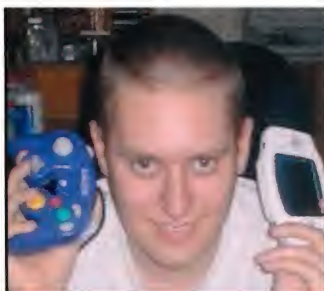
Oct 17th

Your November issue of *Nintendo Official Magazine UK* is out today, so go and buy it. And while you're out you can pick up a copy of the sublime *Mario Advance 4* for £30, too.

Feedback Team

Instant reaction to this month's hot topics from people like you.

Want to have a go? Then send us your name, address, phone number and email address to **NOM UK's Feedback Team**, Nintendo Official Magazine UK, Emap Active, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 5UW. Don't forget to include a photo, too!



**ANTHONY HOBSON,
ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD**



**BEN TURNER,
MAIDSTONE**



**STEVEN ASHFORD-
BANNISTER, P'BOROUGH**

1 ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT DONKEY KONGA?

"I guess I am. I like to play games like *Dancing Stage* every now and then, and the thought of playing a game with a drum sounds really interesting."

"I'm not sure if this will be the game that GameCube needs, I think Nintendo should have gone with a more original Donkey Kong game and put this in as a cool mini-game."

"No. I wanted to see a true Donkey Kong game coming to GameCube. I know some people like this sort of stuff but it's not for me."

2 WHAT ABOUT ANIMAL CROSSING COMING OUT IN AUSTRALIA, BUT NOT EUROPE?

"I'm not very happy. A lot of us Europeans want this game so badly they're having to import it. I think I'm going to have to import it from Australia, as they use PAL television systems."

"Well this subject needs to be sorted out. I got the game on import, but it can tend to be a bit boring after a few months. I feel if Australia can have this, then why can't we?"

"I'm not too fussed about the game itself, but I reckon it's a bit shonky that a smaller market like Australia gets a game and Europe doesn't. Sounds like twisted logic to me."

3 WAS NINTENDO RIGHT TO SET UP THEIR OWN DISPLAY OUTSIDE THIS WEEK'S ECTS?

"If the outside kart displays get the crowds revved up then Nintendo is free to do what it wants. I just hope they have the sense to take this idea around Europe!"

"Yes. Nintendo should have a UK version of the Space World event, for two days or something along those lines. But I think Nintendo got a lot of Sony fans in the truck, as well as Nintendo fans."

"Totally. It'd be a bit weird if Nintendo had a small stand inside Sony's show, that's sort of like admitting defeat, isn't it? Nintendo's exhibition looked pretty cool, too."

4 ARE YOU HAPPY SEEING N64 GAMES BEING RE-PACKAGED WITH GAMECUBE TITLES?

"I never had an N64, so playing many of these games for the first time was interesting. I think it should only happen once in a while. I'd like to see *Super Mario 64* and the N64's *Paper Mario*."

"I was happy with *Ocarina of Time* as I didn't play the original. I think Nintendo would sell a lot more games if it released updated N64 games, for example *Mario Kart 64* with LAN support in with *Double Dash*."

"For me, N64 games belong on the N64 and you can pick one up for about £20. Rather than waiting to see if Nintendo might release a remake, just get out there and get playing."

5 ALONG WITH WARIO WARE ARE ANY OTHER GBA GAMES RIPE FOR CONVERSION?

"This one's easy: the *Golden Sun* and *Advance Wars* series! They'd make great GameCube games as it's lacking in real-time strategy titles and RPGs."

"I think *Wario Ware* for the GameCube is a brilliant idea. I would like to see the Super NES-style *Mega Man* series a bit more on GameCube, too."

"I'm a big fan of some of the 2D shooting games like *Phalanx*. Something to rival *Ikaruga* would be great."

6 GAMECUBE'S NOW \$99 IN THE USA. WOULD A SIMILAR PRICE HERE BE GOOD?

"Yes I think it would. When there was an unofficial price cut in Europe, GameCube sales rose. A price cut (or a bundle of GameCube, game, and Memory Card 251) could encourage sales."

"I think the GameCube is at a great price at the moment, but if it was reduced to £79.99 and came with a game, demo disc, memory card and the GB Player, sales would increase."

"It needs more than a price cut. Some cool bundles could be the way to go. A couple of games maybe and two controllers, and a Memory Card 251. That would rule."

The NOM UK giveaway

We've been out blagging so that you guys can win all this cool stuff. Check it...

COMPETITION 01

Bulletproof Monk DVD and T-shirt

In *Bulletproof Monk*, a group of, er... monks spend their lives protecting a sacred scroll that'll give world-ruling powers to anyone who reads it. But when a crazy Nazi nutter sets out to get hold of the scroll the main monk flees New York and finds a disciple. They then work together to kick some Nazi ass and protect the scroll in this action-packed film.

Five winners can blag the *Bulletproof Monk* DVD and a T-shirt, too.

Text Keyword:
'MONK'

Q. What's the name of the actor that plays the lead role of a nameless Chinese monk in the film?

- a. Chow Yun-Fat
- b. Lee Xiao Long
- c. Jet Li



COMPETITION 02

WWE Wrestlemania XIX for GameCube

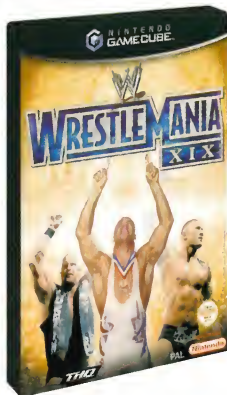
WWE XIX serves up some hard-hitting wrestling action and there's enough in there to keep fans entertained for months.

Fancy some of that? We've got friends at THQ, who'll sort out a copy of the game for three lucky winners. So if your wrestling knowledge is up to scratch, answer the question below and give it a shot.

Text Keyword: 'WWE'

Q. What do the letters 'TLC' stand for in a TLC Match?

- a. The Largest Chest
- b. Tender Loving Care
- c. Tables Ladders Chairs



COMPETITION 03

Soul Calibur II and the SC II GameCube Arcade Stick

GameCube is about to be graced with the best fighting game on a Nintendo console for years. We've got four copies of *Soul Calibur II* to give away and all you have to do is answer the question below. As well as a copy of the game, the top prize winner will also get an awesome Arcade Stick for the complete experience. Don't miss out...

Text Keyword: 'CALIBUR'

Q. Which of these *Soul Calibur II* fighters is exclusive to the GameCube version?

- a. Xianghou
- b. Kilik
- c. Link



HOW TO ENTER

By phone

Dial 0905 053 110, then add the number of the competition on the end. So, if you're entering the *Soul Calibur II* competition, dial 0905 053 1103, answer the question and leave your name, address and telephone number.

By post

Write the competition number clearly at the top of the envelope or postcard. So if you're entering the *Bulletproof Monk* competition, write to: Competition 1, *Nintendo Official Magazine UK*, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 5UW

By text message

Text the words nomcomp 'keyword' and your answer to 83149. So, if you want to enter the *WWE XIX* competition, type nomcomp WWE then the answer at the end. Unfortunately, this service is not available for Virgin Mobile users.

IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ! All entries for the competitions must be received by 10/10/2003 to qualify.



Which Link are you?

Take our hero-defining test to end confusion.

You're wearing a green tunic. That's a given. But do you have a Hookshot? Which Link ARE you? It's so hard to tell and without that solid categorisation you know that your life is going to be a mess. You can't go

showing up at a pixelly cave all dressed in sharp polygons, can you? If you do, Sahasrahla will have a freaking heart attack and won't help you at all. Now take the test...

1 Would you consider wearing an earring?

- A.** Grandma says I'm too young. She said she'd crack my brain open if I let Tetra and the pirates give me one. Thing is, they're cool aren't they? They make you look NUFF harder, innit?
- B.** Of course! Look at this glorious ring! When people see me, I want them to notice my ring. To think: 'What a RING!' It goes with my White Tights of Power perfectly.
- C.** I really don't think that's the sort of accessory a warrior like me should be seen in. I mean, these Pegasus Shoes are camp enough, but at least they let me sprint.
- D.** Listen dude, there's barely room on my low-res face for eyes. You can only see my nose when I turn sideways on and even then I look like cocking Pinocchio.

2 What are your thoughts on masks?

- A.** I don't know about masks, but get this, man: MY EYEBROWS GO OVER MY HAIR. If I was to wear a mask, though, I'd get a Jason mask and scare my Grandma into getting me an earring.
- B.** I've got a stack of masks! Check me out! Now I look like the Deku Kid! Now you probably think you're looking at a rabbit! Ha ha! I'm the motherlovin' mask master, you get me?
- C.** If I see ANYTHING wearing a mask, I SMASH IT OFF with my hammer. Then I stand towards the back of the screen and pop arrows into its face from long range.
- D.** What else could you possibly do with 6x6 pixels? I'm still going to look anonymous, aren't I? You know what? Girls HATE me. The Elephant Man gets more tail than I do.

3 Describe a giant fairy to us.

- A.** They're kind of gaunt looking, but elegant. There is an undertone of wickedness in those dark eyes, though. I've started wetting the bed again. It runs down into the lounge below.
- B.** They look like the kind of ladies that shake their ass for money, if you know what I mean. You go in for some health and it's like you're in a strip club or something. Basically they rock my world.
- C.** They look like fairies. Not menacing, not sexual in any way, just wholesome and health giving and good. Just the way it should be, right?
- D.** They were fairies? I thought it was meat or something. I suppose, looking back on it now, meat wouldn't flutter around would it? But eating fairies to get healthier? Is that the Atkins diet?

4 What's your best line for impressing girls?

- A.** I learnt a sweet line from Beedle when I was buying some bombs. You just go: "OOOOOOHHHHHHH!". And you also remember to scream "THANKYOU!" when she leaves. I'm a real playa.
- B.** I let Navi do the talking for me. It flies up to the bar and keeps shouting 'LISTEN' at them until they're disorientated and vulnerable. Then I flash my tights and they fall over.
- C.** I swing my sword and grunt a bit. Talk is cheap, baby. It's all about the actions. Look how my sword shoots out energy! Chang, chang! Ladies love that. If you don't believe me, take a look at my harem.
- D.** I beep. That's all I do. BEEP. She's all like: 'Well hello there, handsome! How come I can only see your nose when you're side-on?' And I'm like 'BEEP! BEEP!' It doesn't work and I tend to go back to my pixel house alone. Sometimes I cry at night.

Mostly As...

YOU'RE NEW LINK!



Mostly Bs...

YOU'RE ADULT LINK!



Mostly Cs...

YOU'RE RETRO LINK!



Mostly Ds...

YOU'RE REALLY-RETRO LINK!



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HANDS UP IF YOU HATE RPGS

Frank admissions from the king of gaming, as *NOM UK* meets Miyamoto in Japan

Interview by Chris Kohler*



It is perhaps the greatest thrill of all for a Nintendo fan to walk into the company's fortress-like worldwide headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. The front doors slide open noiselessly, revealing the wide, pure-white foyer. Two identical-looking women wearing GameCube-purple bow in unison and lead the way to the meeting room where, in one of the giant leather chairs surrounding a low table, waits gaming idol, Shigeru Miyamoto.

At 50, Miyamoto no longer looks like the shaggy-haired, banjo-playing youngster who created *Donkey Kong*. But the spark is still there and unmistakable, just behind his eyes.



I DON'T JUST SPOUT THINGS OUT. AS PEOPLE COME TO KNOW ME, THEY THINK OF ME AS A LOGICAL TYPE.

NOM UK: We have to ask. What's happening with Mario? *Shigeru Miyamoto:* I can't say anything concrete yet — sorry. We're making it, of course and as far as Mario games go, I want to make this a different — but still Mario-esque — new type of Mario game.

NOM UK: When do you hope to announce it? A lot of people thought that it would be announced at E3, for sure.

SM: No kidding... at E3, the question I was asked the most was, where is *Mario 128*? But I can't say anything now. Sorry!

NOM UK: As for games that were announced at E3... how much involvement do you have in the work that N-Space are doing on *Geist*?

SM: We are working more and more directly with N-Space. In fact, some of our staff members are actually solely dedicated to our collaboration with N-Space. In terms of the level of the involvement, if Silicon Knights is like here

[holds hand in the air], N-Space is much less. But it's not something like: "Okay, you make the game and we're just gonna sit over here and watch." We're deeply involved. But less so than with, say, Silicon Knights or Retro.

NOM UK: It seems as though there is a conflict between your real self and your public image that's been built up as this kindly, slightly batty, old man who makes cutting-edge video games for little kids. What do you say to that?

SM: You want to know my reputation among Nintendo staff members? I'm loud and hard on everybody; I stick to minute detailed points; I'm the guy who changes his opinions one after another; and I'm the guy who is still fighting for his opinion even past midnight. People who don't know me say that I just spout things out from my gut feeling, but as they come to know me better they think of me as more of a logical type.

NOM UK: You're a musician; you play the guitar, banjo, mandolin.... but we've never seen any musical games from Nintendo. Ever thought of doing something like that?

SM: Of course, we are not intentionally avoiding making music games. We've done a few games that have a music-making feature, like *Mario Paint* and I love that. *Samba De Amigo* is a great game, too, for example. And we have such good music composers here that I often say to them, why don't you come up with a great music game rather than always trying to attach music to the games that others are making?

NOM UK: What about RPGs? Nintendo has traditionally not done many of them.... basically it's been *Super Mario RPG* and



Earthbound. But these have been extremely popular among fans. What was your involvement with them? And what do you like and dislike about the RPG format?

SM: I personally have a fundamental dislike of the RPG system. But there are so many people who do like it and there are certain types of games for which that system is perfectly suited. I think that with an RPG you are completely bound hand and foot, and can't move. But gradually, you become able to move your hands and legs... you become slightly untied. And in the end, you feel powerful. So what you get out of an RPG is a feeling of happiness. But I don't think they're something that's fundamentally fun to play.

With a game like that, anyone can become really good at it. With Mario though, if you're not good at it, you may never get good. I don't really like the system, but if you need to have a game with dialogue – in the case of Shigesato Itoi's *Mother*, as far as bringing

about a writer's voice and bring a book to life. And in the case of Mario, if you're not good at action games but still want to play a Mario title, you can. In those cases, it's a good system.

For *Super Mario RPG*, I worked on the game system and the game ideas as well; for *Earthbound*, I just worked on the game system. But I did speak to Itoi quite often, giving him encouragement.

NOM UK: Is there any possibility of the *Mother 1&2* Game Boy Advance collection coming out in English?

SM: We had high hopes for *Earthbound*, the Super NES version, in the US, but it didn't do well. We even did a TV commercial, thinking, "Hey... this thing could sell three million copies!" But it didn't. You might not know this, but there was a petition in the US, a 'Please make *Mother 3*' petition and it got about 30,000 signatures on it! After that we thought, "Wow... *Earthbound* fans are really solid."



NOM UK: *Mother* was very much tailored to the Japanese audience, being the product of a popular Japanese writer and perhaps it struck the 'mainstream' US audience as being a little bit too strange. For *Mother 3*, are you thinking about making it more universally acceptable?

SM: We're always thinking about how to make products sell all over the world. Even at the very beginning when *Donkey Kong* came to America, there was some initial misunderstanding – but it was the American game players who made it huge.

I thought that *Hamtaro* was only going to work in Japan. But now it's really working in the US, too, and Europe. There are games where I think, "this will only work in Japan", but they end up selling in the US anyway. These days, we are seeing so many other things going abroad, like animation. Something which was originally thought of as purely Japanese in the foreign markets. It's really quite a recent trend. But I was always concerned in the beginning, not just in terms of Japan, but in terms of the overseas market as well.

NOM UK: Getting onto *Zelda*, are there any plans yet to re-release *The Adventure of Link* [the second game in the *Zelda* series]? Currently it's only available on the Famicom Disk System in Japan and they've stopped making them.

SM: That... is a secret. *Link's Adventure*... if we were to just bring it out again, it wouldn't be enough fun. It's a little rough around the edges, isn't

it? The Disk System had certain limitations and if we were using the cartridge format it would have been better. You know, the American version is improved. It would be great if we were to give the American version of *Link's Adventure* to Japan, but... [shrugs].

Even among our staff, they love *Link's Adventure*. They're always saying, "Let's do it on GameCube!" [laughs] But I don't know. Not yet.

NOM UK: You've spoken of conflicts between design and practical concerns in the early days. Can you elaborate on that? Do you find that it's still the case today?

SM: It's a really difficult thing – on one hand, there is the thought that the artist has to be free, so they can demand whatever they think is best. On the other hand, the designers have to have at least a certain understanding about what technology can allow. In my own case, I ask my people to understand to some extent the technologies available to us. After all, if the designers are designing without understanding the background information, they can never design something feasible, something that is going to turn out to be an actual product in the end.

Of course, it is good to have people who can think in whatever ways they want to and demand whatever they want for the best. After all, the best designers want to create something very unique. So once again, it's a very tough decision. But in my own case I demand people to understand what is feasible, because I myself am an industrial designer.



I HAVE A DISLIKE OF THE RPG SYSTEM, BUT THERE ARE SO MANY WHO LIKE IT.



NOM UK: We heard that the very first game you were working on had something to do with seesaws. What exactly was it all about?

SM: [smiles] *Seesaw*, that was Gunpei Yokoi's idea. He wanted a game where you bounce on the seesaw and bounce up off of it. But [laughs] we couldn't figure out how to do it, it was really difficult. With a seesaw, if you get on one end, the other end goes up. If you hit one end real hard, the other end goes up just as hard. It was interesting to think about this, but we couldn't do it. We were able to make the lifts that you see in *Super Mario Bros.*, though — one goes up, one goes down... that, we were able to do.

To be able to translate your ideas into something that works. That's the game designer's job.

NOM UK: Was *Donkey Kong Junior* the very next game you worked on after *DK*?

SM: Yes. During *Donkey Kong*'s development, we were already thinking about things that would become *DK Jr* and even designing the stages. We had fleshed out all of these ideas,

but we couldn't use them in *Donkey Kong*. So, one of my friends who was making the game with me said, "We've got all these ideas, why don't we make another game?" And Nintendo told me to make a sequel to *Donkey Kong*, so...

I wanted *Donkey Kong* to be the player-character in this game. But DK is really big, so we couldn't really do an action game with him. We couldn't make the screen scroll or anything. And so we were in a fix. So we thought, well, let's make a little *Donkey Kong*, to use in place of Mario.

We did still want a big *Donkey Kong* on top of the screen. But of course, he couldn't be the main enemy — it couldn't be the son versus the father. So we thought, "Ah, Mario has captured him!"

NOM UK: What exactly were you thinking, switching the good guy and bad guy? When you've talked about *Donkey Kong* elsewhere, you've said that he was not a bad character, that maybe he was just misguided or confused, or that Mario was even mean to him sometimes.

SM: Yeah, it's like *Popeye*. At that time, I was originally supposed to be making a *Popeye*-licensed game. But when that fell through, I was still thinking about the relationship between *Popeye*, Bluto and Olive Oyl. Their relationship is somewhat friendly. They're not enemies, they're friendly rivals.

But I needed different characters. The main character, the big, strong guy, and the beautiful woman... well, uh, Olive really isn't a beautiful woman. I figured I'd make mine beautiful instead [laughs].

What's kind of a mystery is, why did I title the game *Donkey Kong*? The main character, the player, was Mario. That much was decided. But really *Donkey Kong*'s personality was the most fleshed-out of all of them. I really think it's best to name the game after its strongest character.

NOM UK: Do you like what Rare did with the *Donkey Kong* series? And what are you trying to do with the brand-new *Donkey Kong* game that Nintendo is working on right now?

SM: Hm... well. I'd like to use *Donkey Kong* for as long as possible and in many other ways. Since he was the first character I designed, I do like him very much. I've always thought that if Nintendo ever got into robotics, if the technology allowed us, the first thing I would work on is a giant *Donkey Kong* robot. Then, if I ever found myself out of a job I could wear the *Donkey Kong* suit and... do some kind of part-time job with it [laughs].

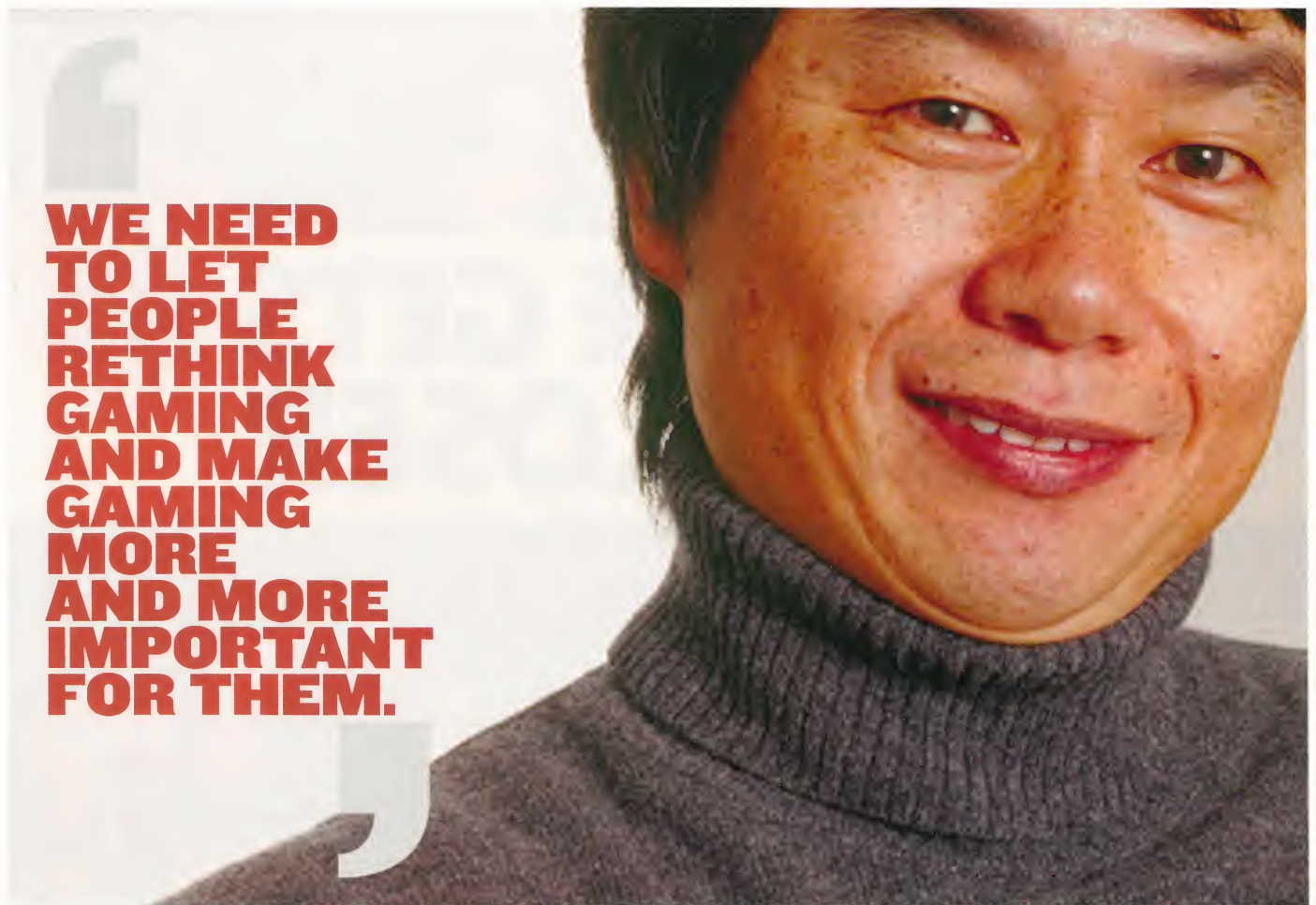
NOM UK: What was it like working with Denis Dyack and Silicon Knights and with Retro, and how was that different from what it was like working with Rare?

SM: The relationship with each of these companies has been very different. Denis Dyack is an author. We're working to give him the business opportunity to make the games that he wants to; to support him and help him realise his dream. Retro is a production company, so we are thinking how to benefit both companies. And Rare is an independent company that can make whatever it wants to make. So,

I'D LIKE TO USE DONKEY KONG FOR AS LONG AS WE CAN AND IN MANY OTHER WAYS.



WE NEED TO LET PEOPLE RETHINK GAMING AND MAKE GAMING MORE AND MORE IMPORTANT FOR THEM.



like Retro, we needed to do what was best for both of us.

NOM UK: We get the impression that Rare didn't work very closely with Nintendo to polish up its last few games, especially *Star Fox Adventures*.

SM: Rare is a rather independent company and it has the capacity to work independently. In the case of the original *Donkey Kong Country*, because I was concerned about the outcome, I was checking in and putting in comments myself, especially during the last few months. At the very beginning, my personal involvement was ten per cent. This lessened as the sequels went on, but of course other people at Nintendo were always involved. The total involvement was always around ten per cent and this was mainly from my people.

NOM UK: *Star Fox Adventures* just didn't feel like a Nintendo

game; it didn't feel like you had your hands on it at all, much less ten per cent.

SM: Almost everything was done by Rare, except we specifically advised about the use of the control stick.

NOM UK: You didn't tell them, for example, to get rid of the 100 or 200 stupid things that you had to collect in every single level?

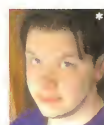
SM: [Laughs] That was a little bit extreme, yes. But, in general, they were good. I'd like to emphasise that our separation from Rare wasn't due to creative differences. It was financial.

NOM UK: Finally, let's talk about Nintendo's position now. From the perspective of a software designer, what are you trying to do now to get Nintendo back on top?

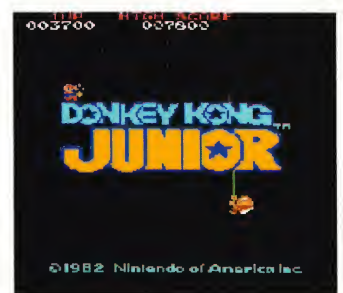
SM: At the very least, we are always aiming to be the number-one games developer and publisher. That's for sure. In order to do so, we always try to

challenge ourselves with projects that are really new and innovative. There were times in the past that video gaming meant an awful lot to a lot of people. There were times when people put gaming as their top entertainment priority. Those days are gone and we need to let people rethink gaming, and make gaming more and more important for them.

But to do that, we need to do something bold and brand-new, or the total market may shrink. And if we are just fighting against our competitors to be at the top of a shrinking marketplace, it doesn't make that much difference in the public eye. So thinking about the big picture, we want to make changes so that people realise what we are making is truly innovative and fascinating.



THE AUTHOR
After his BA in Japanese, Chris Kohler went to live in Kyoto, Japan as a Fulbright scholar. He is currently writing a book on Japanese video games titled *Super Mario Nation*.





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Mario Kart: Double Dash!!

Guess who's back.

THIS
ISSUE'S
BIG
STORY

Mike



This month I've been playing this lot to death...

- F-Zero GX
- Super Mario Advance 4
- Zelda: The Wind Waker
- Super Monkey Ball

Tim



This month I've been playing this lot to death...

- F-Zero GX
- Winning Eleven 6
- Advance Wars 2
- Super Tennis

Dom



This month I've been playing this lot to death...

- Soul Calibur II
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004
- Winning Eleven 6
- Magical Quest 2

Dean



This month I've been playing this lot to death...

- F-Zero GX
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004
- Pokémotion
- Super Punch-Out!!

Kingsley



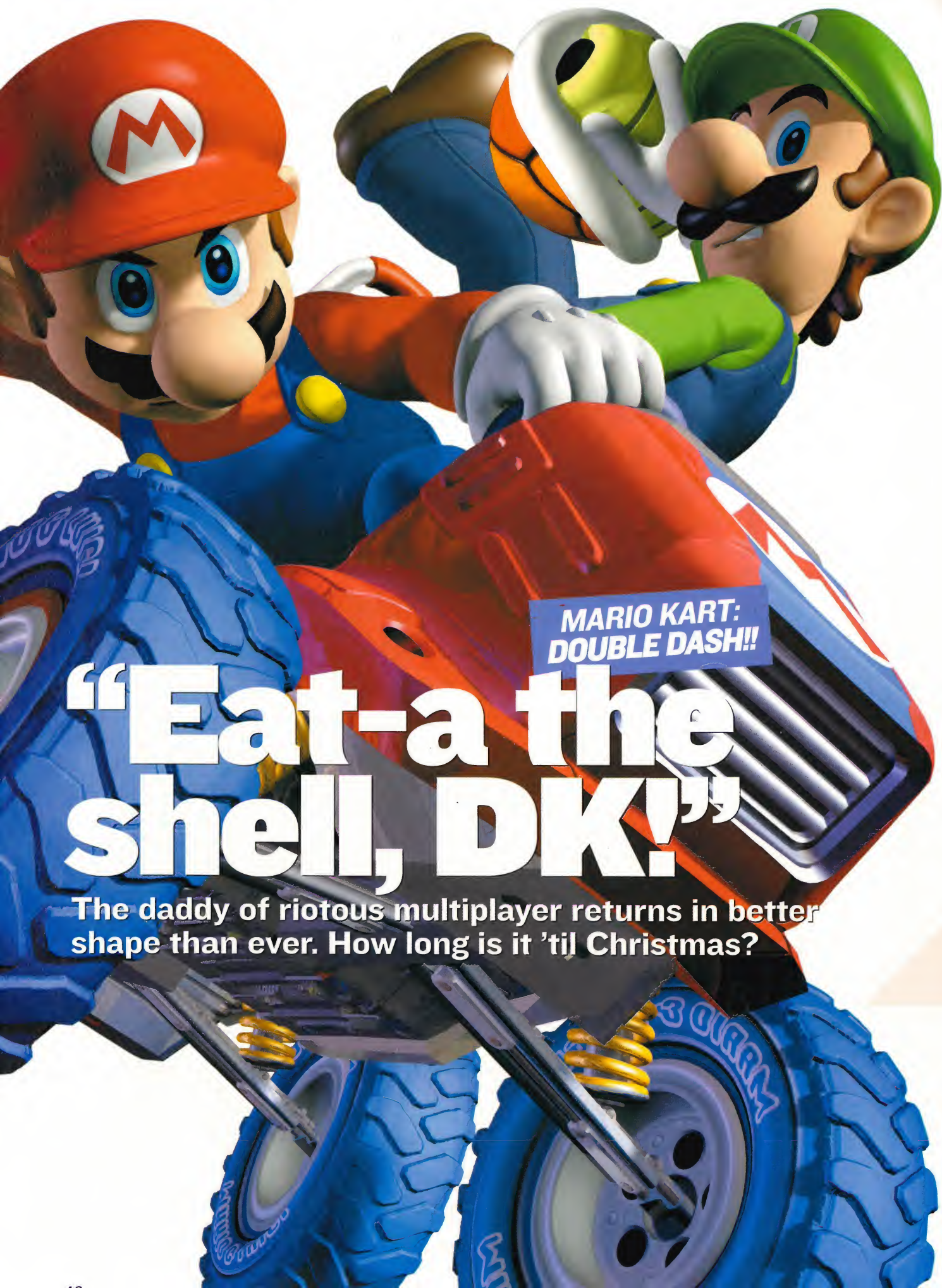
This month I've been playing this lot to death...

- Advance Wars 2
- Winning Eleven 6
- Mario Golf
- Super Monkey Ball 2



Preview

Bigger. Better. Smarter.



**MARIO KART:
DOUBLE DASH!!**

“Eat-a the shell, DK!”

**The daddy of riotous multiplayer returns in better
shape than ever. How long is it 'til Christmas?**

The talk was all about whether it still rocked. Whether it was still the best four-player game without guns, blood or a football. Some excitedly wondered whether there *would be* guns and blood. That was the talk in the queue to *Mario Kart: Double Dash* at this year's ECTS show. That and was it fast enough? It seemed some had come away from *Double Dash*'s debut at this year's E3 show in May with reservations about its speed, or

lack of it. This was something Nintendo quickly picked up on, prompting them to reassure people that it was an early build. Well, times have changed since *Mario Kart 64* came out and in that time Nintendo's vision of *Mario Kart* has evolved, but one thing we're sure of is that the new game is still all about multi-handed mash-ups, and still pumping along at high speed. Red Shells at the ready, let's go...

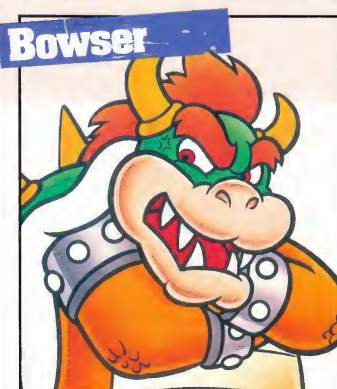
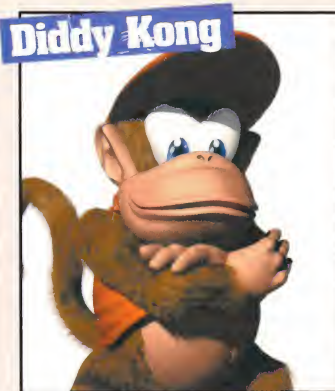


The dream team

Who's your favourite, or more to the point, who are your two favourites? See, at the start of the game you have to select your character. Nothing radical there you might think, but in *Mario Kart: Double Dash* you

can choose from any of the 16 characters in a pick-and-mix style, and with Nintendo promising 'at least' 16, there might be more on the way. When we played, someone chose Mario and Bowser, causing instant

uproar. 'You can't have Mario and Bowser on the same team', came the moans. 'It just isn't the done thing.' Well, it is now, so start thinking about your dream partnership from some of these superstars...





Weapons of mass disruption

Being the don at *Mario Kart* has always been about using the right weapon at the right time. It's the chess of the karting world, with levels of strategy that create incredibly tense races.

That hasn't changed in *Double Dash*, but it has evolved and now new, even sneakier passports to victory are yours to deploy. How about being towed at speed by a giant

Chain Chomp with its gnashing teeth chewing up anyone in its path? It certainly makes it easy to hit the front.

Then there's the classic move to pull when you come out of a scramble for a weapon empty-handed. Now you can amble up beside a cart carrying rich bounty and literally swipe their weapons clean out of the holder's clutching hands. Just imagine

how many arguments that's going to cause!

The list of innovations goes on. You can evade Red Shells by drifting away from them and pick up weapons specific to your character. For example, Bowser lays down a spiked Red Shell that covers half the track and instantly causes a multi-kart pile-up and instantly causes a multi-kart pile-up bound to upset the leader board. At least Jackson might win once in a while then.



"One thing's for sure *Mario Kart's* still all about multi-handed mash-ups and still pumps along at speed."

When you've got friends

Double Dash is great in single player, but for a truly exhilarating experience you've got to play with friends.

Through various ways of connecting it's possible to have up to 16 people playing at once, although for that many people you'll

need four GameCubes, four copies of the game, Broadband Adapters and a Network Cable, plus a selection of TVs. Phew!

But for less-expensive tastes there's the option to play split-screen, all without a glitch in the frame-rate. It gets even better,

though, because you can team up and choose to drive or chuck the weapons, with the ability to swap around mid-race. There's even a new mode that challenges you to bomb your opponents three times for victory. Frantic just doesn't describe it!



In with the new

- 1 Two switchable characters means you can hold two weapons and change between characters to deliver both in the blink of an eye. The one at the back throws the weapons you see!
- 2 It's the choice of kart that determines the handling, so you can play with your favourite characters and choose the right kart for the right track.
- 3 You can steal weapons out of your opponents' grasp, rendering them helpless and you armed and dangerous, and ready to rampage. Eat that lightning, Yoshi!
- 4 Now each character has a weapon of their own. Getting it is a case of driving into scattered item blocks and using **X** or **Y** to send it up the ass of your rivals.
- 5 Two players can take control of characters on the same team with one in charge of firing weapons and one dealing with the driving.
- 6 With the right equipment you can have 16 people playing at the same time in one great big *Mario Kart: Double Dash* love-in. Get saving, gang!

Insider knowledge



Down at the ECTS Nintendo area we caught up with Nintendo's *Double Dash* Product Manager, Marko Hein and got him to spill the beans on the next instalment in Nintendo's cracking high-speed kart fest. Take it away Marko...

NOM UK: There are rumours that Nintendo might release a bonus disc with *Double Dash* containing *Mario Kart 64*, can you tell us anything about that?

Marko Hein: No decision has been made, but I don't think we'll end up releasing it with *Double Dash*. It just doesn't make sense to release two games that are nearly identical. For *The Wind Waker* [where they released a bonus disc containing *Ocarina of Time*] both games had a different story line, so there wasn't a problem.

NOM UK: At E3 some people came away thinking the game needed to be faster. This version is faster, but will it get quicker still?

MH: When the press came to the show [E3] they knew it was an early version, but they expected a final version, especially with the speed and the fine tuning! This comes at a late stage, right at the end of production. It's the same for all games and not just Nintendo games. We always planned to make it faster and we communicated this to Mr Miyamoto directly to say we've got a lot of feedback from European consumers who thought the game was too slow. Then we received a newer version of *Double Dash* some weeks later and there was a wonderful progression.

NOM UK: Is there anything else that's being worked on that isn't in this build?

MH: I've played a version where there's more extensive use of the special items. In the older version the items were standard for all players, but now each character has their own item. For example, Koopa has a very big shell, Yoshi has the big rolling egg and DK has a huge banana.

NOM UK: Are there item blocks that are specifically for the individual weapons?

MH: No, it's random.

NOM UK: The strategy between the two riders is a big part of the game. Was that quite an early idea?

MH: I think it's always very important when you have an established franchise like *Mario Kart* that you bring more variety to the gameplay. In general *Mario Kart* is *Mario Kart*, but what I think is

improved this time is the strategic elements and the multiplayer modes. For example, when you choose two small characters, you only have the choice of the small karts, with faster acceleration, but a lower top speed. When you choose two big buddies you have to take the bigger karts.

NOM UK: How many tracks are there?

MH: It's similar to how it was in the old days. First of all there are three Cups available and each Cup has four courses. Then you unlock the Special Cup with another four courses and then you can unlock two more courses. Rainbow Road is in there, but there are two more hidden Cups that are a surprise for players. Of course, not the same courses as the N64 version, but new designs. The look and feel is the same, but the courses are absolutely different.

NOM UK: Can you once again tap the brake to recover from a banana skin?

MH: No, it's not in this version. To be honest, I can't tell you whether it will be in the final version.



Essentials

The developer is... Nintendo
They've done... *Super Mario Kart* (Super NES), *Mario Kart 64* (N64)

Multiplayer is... 1-16 players
Connectivity is... LAN connection between four GameCubes and four discs

The publisher is... Nintendo
It's out on... November 14th
We'll be reviewing it in... two issues time

Predicted score

It's back and we think it's different enough to get excited about all over again. There's still something magical about steaming around in a kart with weapons bristling and a cunning plan hatching.

NOM UK Predicts

90%+



high-ranking Nintendo bods assure us it'll be just as responsive and deep as previous *Mario Kart* games.

What's the best moment?

There are too many to mention, but scattering bananas behind you to take care of the chasing pack before launching a winged Blue Shell to eliminate the race leader is mint.

What's the worst moment?

Should you get the Chain Chomp it's incredibly easy to go from last to first place, so crap racers at the back might tend to win a lot.

going mental too much to resist. We've already got our TVs on order! Talking about the multiplayer side of things, we played four-player split-screen and there isn't the faintest whiff of slowdown and only a minimal drop in trackside detail.

Can you still power-slide like a Nintendo mascot possessed?

The power-slide is back again due to popular demand. Wagging the 3D Stick while sliding will trigger a speed boost, perfect for slingshots out of corners and into the lead. It was a bit erratic in the version we played, but

which is an update of *Wario's Stadium* except the road is different and there's a section where mechanical Piranha Plants pop out of tunnels and spinning fireball windmills cause havoc.

What's this I've heard about 16-player games?

No, it's not your TV divided up into 16 little boxes, it's a way of connecting up to four GameCubes fitted with Broadband Adapters and TVs together to create a monster of a multiplayer contest. It's a little niche, but we're sure there'll be some out there that'll find the lure of 16 *Mario Kart* freaks

well into retirement, especially now I've seen and played the newer, much faster version.

It sounds like they've changed just about everything. Does it still feel like a Mario Kart game?

I see what you mean; we've concentrated on what's new in *Double Dash* because people want to know what's fresh. But rest assured this is most definitely the successor to *Mario Kart 64*, in style as well as in looks. Many of the courses revisit familiar themes, but they're essentially full of new challenges, like Waluigi's Stadium,



Trust me, I've played it

In my humble opinion, *Mario Kart* is one of the best racing franchises in the world, with multiplayer gaming to die for. I've lost count of how many lunch time *Mario Kart 64* sessions have been played in the NOM UK offices and I'm sure we'll be thrashing *Double Dash*



Preview

24

hours with

Boktai

6am



6am YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?

So here I am, fresh from my pit and still a bit on the savoury side. My eyes are stinging, the way they do when you get up at some STUPID TIME to play a video game. My body knows it should still be sleeping. It tried its best to resort to that natural state on the drive over. The A427 belongs to rabbits at that time of the morning and one of them died trying to defend its territory.

7am IT'S COLD OUTSIDE

Trust me to pick the one morning when God flipped the on switch for light, but not for heat. I'm freezing my nuts off outside – there's no natural light in the office. The windows don't open wide enough for me to hang out of them and play that way. Luckily I'm a genius and think to sit in the car with the sunroof open. Sara Cox: shut up. This is all Japanese and I need to concentrate.

“The major innovation is the sun sensor, but this restricts where you can play.”

8am I THINK I'VE GOT IT

I'm this kid. He has Japanese game-hair, but otherwise looks kinda cool. There's a talking flower too, but it must just be telling me where to go. The big arrows give that away. I'm going into a dungeon to kill a vampire. Then I'm going to haul his casket back out here into the sunlight and the dream is over for him. In the dungeon, there are big spiders to test my gun on, keys to find, doors to open. Familiar stuff.

9am A CHINK OF LIGHT

Down in the dungeons, there's not much light, but, cleverly, you can still recharge your ammo from time to time. Cracks in the walls and barred windows let in a bit of light and if you stand in the bright patch and hold **A** you stock up. You can recharge by just standing there, but it's not quick in the low-power English sunshine. Holding **A** leaves you open to attack though, so know what's around you.

10am IMMORTAL: THIS WAY

We're here. The boss door. There's a big sign that says IMMORTAL with an arrow, just in case I was in any doubt. I'm pretty engrossed by this point and don't really notice the rest of the lads filtering in. I open the door, get set upon by millions of bats, go mental with my pistol and start tugging the coffin away on a big chain. Down the stairs, dum-de-dum. Feeling quite smug at this point.

11am THE SHAKY BOX: OH MY CHRIST! NOW THE BLOODY BOX IS SHAKING ALL OVER THE PLACE!

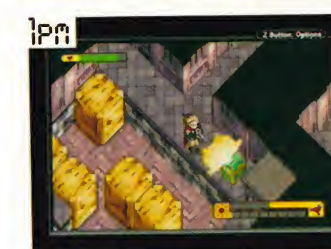
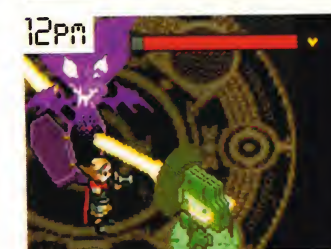
Dracula's going to spring out, he's going to be nuff pissed off that I'm stealing him and he's going to LASER EYE me or something. Oh no, he's just rattling about. But it hurts me if I don't let him completely shake himself out. The rattling makes a noise. Some guards come, look surprised and start pulling the casket back. Until I END them.

12noon LET'S KILL IT

It took me four attempts to get the casket out, and I've towed it to the start. Two big mirror things flip out of the floor (just like the Flaahgra boss stage in *Metroid Prime*). I blast them to get them going and Drac starts to suffer. But he fights back. His black reach starts to smother the white attack beams. I have to keep charging up and pump firepower into them alternately to drive him back. It's like spinning plates.

1pm A BIT ABOUT BULLETS

I'm eating, so we'll cover some stuff I've missed. Mmm... chicken. You start with a basic pea shooter gun, and the first dungeon yields a power-up that lets you fire a steady torch-like beam of death, like a flamethrower. And it KILLS your ammo in seconds. Later on you also grab firepower that circles you and a neat power-conserving shotgun mode. But you need to get in close for that. BAM!





2pm

THE CAST SO FAR

Got sidetracked into a session on *F-Zero GX* with Jackson, so let's get back on track with a quick bestiary. The giant spiders won't chase you, but the webs they leave will snare you up. The little green zombie types spot you and give chase, before exploding their heads into a swarm of dirty black blobs that stick to you, suck away your health and slow you right down. Exiting the room clears them, as does a manic little shake.

3pm

THE QUEST CONTINUETH

I'm heading for the second dungeon now. It's not quite as simple. There's a maze of gardens to weave through before I can even get close. The isometric view makes it tricky to pick the paths on a higher level to you and you wonder why you can't climb up a three-foot ledge. There are guards that roll into balls to attack and you have to make them roll into each other to stun them for the kill. That's cool.

4pm

IT'S A TRAP

The IMMORTAL pointer is up already. I trot through and the word TRAP! flashes up as iron bars shoot up to bar the exit. A swarm of bats appear. I'm shooting like a nutter and charging and when I'm done I get a ranking. B+. The door opens. Later, another trap. This time it's a big spinning sword. And there's only a chink of light to charge in. It's harder. C-. And most of my health is gone.

5pm

BLOCK PUZZLES

Dungeon two is also full of crates. And walkways with a crate-shaped gap in them. And *Zelda*-style panels that open a door when you step on them. So a little bit of clever block shiftmanship is the order of the day. You can only push blocks – you can't grab them and pull them, which minces your mind. One cool puzzle stars a mummy who you lure onto the switch, before bolting for the door.

6pm

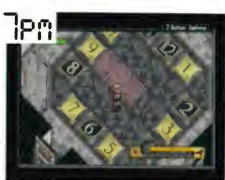
DARKNESS STARTS TO DESCEND

My light meter is right down. It's flickering between one and none, and when it empties, light stops coming in through the cracks and windows. The result? A dark dungeon gets even darker. You can barely see in front of you. It's a cool use of the sensor. There are occasional light orbs you can shoot to provide temporary illumination, but that doesn't dilute the creepiness.

7pm

RANDOM NUMBER PUZZLE

It had to happen. There had to be some punishment for me not speaking the language. Imagine a room with 12 numbers on the floor. Now imagine you've got to step on them in exactly the right order without having any idea what that order is. It's a case of annoying trial and error. It's like being on *The Vault*, but Melanie Sykes isn't there to encourage you. In fact, nobody is. They all went home hours ago. I wonder if the chip shop's still open.



“Press yourself against a wall and suddenly you’re Solid Snake. Tap the **A button, knock on the wall and anyone in earshot pricks up their ears.”**

8pm

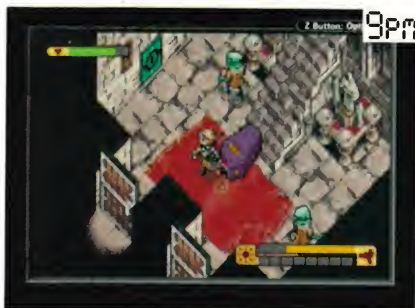
OH MY GOD! THE BULLETS HAVE RUN OUT!

The game isn't broken. The universe is. See, the planet moves and everything, so you only get natural light half the time. Down in Australia, the Koalas can be playing *Boktai* to their heart's content, but for me it's harder. My gun is shooting pure nothing. There are these little green radiator things that will charge you, but they're rare. So my tactics have to change because I can't afford the flight.

9pm

METAL GEAR BOK-LID

Kojima, eh? What a one trick pony. Press yourself against a wall and suddenly you're Solid Snake. Tap the **A** button, knock on the wall and anyone in earshot pricks up their ears with a tell-tale exclamation mark and comes to investigate. By which time you've slipped around the back of them and away. It's easy with one guy, but a whole lot tougher with four, where there's hardly any cover and you're dragging a coffin...



4am

"My tired mind now views the sunlight meter as a real pain."



12am

MARIO MUSHROOM

You can't have a Nintendo game without a mushroom, thinks Konami – despite the fact that 87.4% manage just fine without one. BUT WAIT! This mushroom doesn't make you bigger and more powerful, like other famous red-with-white fungi do. It makes you smaller. You shrink down to mouse-size. Useful for adding stealth and solving puzzles.

Not so good for the World's Strongest Man heats.

1am

OVERHEATING GUN

Clearly the whole point of *Boktai* is that Kojima is sick of looking at your pale, pasty complexion and wants you to catch some goddamn rays. But just so you don't burn to a crisp, he's built in a fail-safe mechanism. If the sensor is exposed to constant, bright sunshine for long periods, your sun gun overheats. You can cheat this by deliberately covering the sensor with your hand. Skillz.

2am

CHEAT MODE!

It's bloody late and I'm getting bored. The lack of light is a major pain in the ass now. At night, you've got to do each section of the dungeon perfectly. But anyway, on a moderately bright English day the best I got was a paltry three on my light meter. When we had a go on this in radiant LA sunshine, we were getting fives and sixes all the time. So, if you want to cheat a little, move somewhere sunnier. It might cost you a bit more than the game will, though.

3am

FRUIT: GOOD FOR YOU

You want to know how the power-up system works, don't you? Well, it's tough if you don't. It's 3am and I'm feeling assertive. Apples give you health. Lemons make you run faster and Limes help you creep. There are *Zelda*-like jars that replenish your health as well. Bananas help you push crates, but the little brown seed don't seem to do much at all. I really should be in bed about now. My body is shouting this at me.

4am

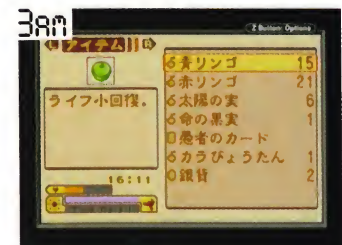
THE BITTERNESS

I'm too tired to think. *Boktai*'s puzzles are now too fearsome for my sleep-starved mind. So I'm looking at the box. Close up. With my head on the desk. Some dribble is running off my cheek. The Japanese box contains this sweet little sunlight sensor card which, while practically pointless, is a cool thing to have. THE SUN MAKES IT LIGHT UP. I bet you we don't get that. I almost guarantee it.

5am

GOING HOME

That's it then. A day and a night's worth of *Boktai*. My tired, fevered mind now views the sunlight meter as a gimmick and a bit of a pain in the ass – as you can't play the game exactly where you want, when you want. In bed, on the bog, whatever. But *Boktai* is a smart little game. The puzzly action adventuring is really good fun and it's certainly as arcadey as any *Zelda* game. It's not a traditional RPG, that's what I'm saying. Oh, lord, I'm tired...



Essentials

The developer is...

Konami Tokyo

They've done... The *Metal Gear* series – not the GC one, that's Silicon Knights

Multiplayer is... four players

Connectivity is... not here.

There's no GC game, dummy.

The publisher is... Konami

It's out in... 2003. That's as

good as you'll get

We'll be reviewing it in...

two or three issues time

Predicted score

The major innovation here is the sun sensor, but this restricts where you play. It's a cool system, but you'll feel a bit of a tool holding your GBA out the window for a recharge. That might kill it for you, but the adventure is good fun.

NOM UK
Predicts

80%+



CAPCOM[®]

www.PN03.co.uk

 **NINTENDO**
GAMECUBE[™]

Exquisite Execution

"Stylish and addictive. A cracking shooter." **Cube Magazine**





**FINAL FANTASY:
CRYSTAL CHRONICLES**

The fantasy is

Welcome back, *Final Fantasy*. After so long, it's great to see a game from one of the biggest and most epic RPG franchises back on a Nintendo console.

As expected, Square Enix have cooked up a king-sized cauldron of story-line goodness for their debut return to the big N. In the luscious-looking world of *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles*, the land is cursed by a strange death mist that's a threat to all life. The people of the land have special crystals that can create magical force fields, protecting them from the mist, but a special type of water is needed to keep these crystals powered and that's where you come in.

You play as a member of a party sent out to gather this water from a special type of tree that grow in different areas of the world. But as you'd expect, this task will be made harder by armies of nasty beasts that guard the trees and it'll take more than a smack in the teeth to budge these guys.



"After so long, it's great to see a game from one of the biggest and most epic RPG franchises back on a Nintendo console."

real

An epic four-player quest awaits you in the GameCube-exclusive *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*





First you must create your character. There are four playable species in the game: Clavats, Selkies, Yukes and Liltys. After picking one of the four, you must give them a name, pick their gender and choose their appearance. Then you'll need to choose an occupation for your character's parents. Yes, this sounds bizarre, but we think it's something to do with being helped by your folks during the game, thus giving you the choice of what aid you want from them. Once you're done, it's time to set out on your adventure.

You navigate your way through the *Crystal Chronicles* world using a 3D map. Move your character and the rest of the party along the paths and select an area to visit, from peaceful towns to the beast-filled areas where special trees are found. So far, this game seems far more level-based than other instalments in the *Final Fantasy* franchise. We seem to simply make our way through an area, defeat the area boss

and grab the goods, then move on to the next area, stopping at a town or two on the way. We know that new areas open up as we make progress, which may demand that we revisit some places, but as you'd expect, playing an RPG in Japanese is completely impossible.

But the structure of the game isn't the only thing that sets *Crystal Chronicles* apart. Square has built up quite a reputation for having some of the most spectacular FMV intro sequences in games. *Crystal Chronicles* instead opens with a movie-like credit sequence, featuring a flyover of some of the game's gorgeous worlds, visualised in beautiful real-time graphics and backed by a mellow tune sung by a (sure-to-be-cute) Japanese chick. It's good enough to bring a tear to your eye.

Believe us when we say you cannot fully appreciate the beauty of this game with just a bunch of screenshots. In the intro you'll see highly detailed villages, with small cottages by a stream. The water is



Boss enemies need teamwork



On-screen, the reflections are amazing



Four-player fantasy

What happened when *NOM UK* played *Crystal Chronicles* four-player mode...



Sir Kingsley of Kipperington says...
"I played as the Yuke, because he had a similar costume to mine. He's got the best magic power, so I was the spell-casting demon of the group. That means while all the others did the dirty fighting, I just stood at the back and threw fireballs. HADOUKEN!"



Timmy 'Shazzam' Tickle says...
"I chose to be a cheeky female Selkie. Hmmm, curves... ahem! Yeah, I like her strength in hand-to-hand combat and her magic is also quite strong. Me and Sir Kipperington were dealing out major punishment with our combined spells. In your face!"



Dan 'Lord' Payne says...
"I was a Lilty. What? STOP LAUGHING! They may be small, but these little chaps have the strongest attack and defence. Forget all that wimpy magic stuff. I was there to put foot to ass, and that's just what I did. Attacking from behind was my speciality!"



Dom 'Rob the Rich' Wint says...
"I chose the all-rounder in, yep... his green outfit. With a good defence, I wasn't afraid of rucking and my strong magic meant I could make a few flashy sparks, too. I also carried the crystal most of the time, because the others were far too into fighting."

"Believe us, you cannot fully appreciate the beauty of *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* with just a bunch of screenshots."

absolutely gorgeous, from the gentle ripples in the pools that distort your view of the underwater features, to the crashing waves of the sea, that splash up onto the beach in a gorgeous believable white spray. Even more jaw-dropping are the electric-like special effects that bend and warp the entire screen as you pass through the purple portal to get to a new area of the world. And with all the highly detailed and beautifully animated characters, the game blends fantasy visuals, with an astounding level of realism,

resulting in a unique look to which no other GameCube game can compare.

We expected this from a *Final Fantasy* game, but what we didn't expect was the battle method in *Crystal Chronicles*. Instead of the usual turn-based fighting system, you face off with nasties in real-time, using the **A** button to attack. You use the **L** and **R** buttons to scroll a menu along at the top of the screen to choose the type of attack you want to unleash. Link-up two to four GBAs to the GameCube and they can be used as controllers. All the controls are the same, but this will allow

four players to battle their way through as a team, using the GBA screen to navigate their menus and set up magic spells without disturbing the action for the others. Players can also work together by combining spells to devastating effect, and defeat enemies using good old teamwork.

We'll know a lot more about these spells and the rest of the items when we get an English-language version to play, so hold on tight for that. We're looking forward to what could be one of the biggest adventures on GameCube. You should be, too.



I'm a bloody adventurer and they've got me out collecting water. Well, whatever, it's your world...



At the start of each level, the characters perform a jazzy dance number. What!? You don't believe us?

"The game blends fantasy visuals, with an astounding level of realism, resulting in a unique look to which no other GameCube game can compare."



Place the blue cursor on that fiend and he'll get a nasty slap

Essentials

The developer is... Game Designer's Studio
They've done... nothing else yet, but they are currently working on *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* (NOM UK, 129)
Multiplayer is... four players
Connectivity is... four-player on-screen play using the GBA as a controller
The publisher is... Nintendo
It's out in... spring 2004
We'll be reviewing it in... an issue early next year

Predicted score

We already love the visuals and the soundtrack is awesome. The new fighting system is great to see in a *Final Fantasy* game, but the multiplayer GBA link-up is not without its faults – we'll be testing that a lot more. Roll on the English version!

NOM UK Predicts **75%+**

Ocarina of Time. Even the boss intros are cool, when the screen shatters in a glass-like effect to cut to the action. It's art, guys. Art.

■ ... and the worst bit?

If you're playing the game alone, you'll be relying on the Google character to carry around your crystal for you. Far too often, the little fella will fall behind, and unless you wait, you'll find yourself running outside the crystal's protective limits. It's not a major problem, but it can be occasionally annoying. Let's hope they fix it.

without it. There were a few occasions where we were fighting a troll or flying beast-thing and it launched an attack, missing us and striking the crystal instead. But it didn't seem to have any effect. Your only worry with the crystal is that it needs to be charged at special hotspots that look like mini water springs.

■ What's the game's best bit?

So far, we just love the cut-scenes. The game looks so good and the soundtrack is genuinely emotive. The intro reminded us of when we first saw the opening flythrough in *Zelda*:

There is indeed. Their performance is divided into three main stats: attack, defence and magic. Clavats are balanced, all-round characters with good magic and defence, and average attack. Selkies have better attack than Clavats, but are inferior in other areas. Yukes have very strong magic power and Liltys have a strong attack and defence, but are poor at magic. Got that?

■ Can the special crystal you carry about be lost or broken?

No, we don't think it can – and thank God, because you'd be screwed

■ **If the battles are in real time, is there a lock-on facility like in *The Wind Walker*?**
 No. The fighting system is completely different. Instead of locking-on to your opponents, you simply have to aim manually and take your swipe at the right moment. However, to do a charge attack or cast a spell, you must hold **A**. This will bring up a cursor, which you can move over your desired victim.

■ **You say you can choose between four types of character. Are there many differences between the various types?**



Trust me, I've played it

How do I feel about *FF:CC*? Surprised, impressed and intrigued. I was surprised because it's nothing like other *Final Fantasy* games, impressed because it's far better looking on screen than I had expected and intrigued because it's got a great plot and interesting spells, but it's all in Japanese, dammit!

Pokémon with flippers

The Pokémon return in this clever little pinball game.

Come take a look at the tables as we get up close with the critters.



POKÉMON PINBALL RUBY AND SAPPHIRE

You can guarantee that Nintendo will always go one step further than you'd expect. Take *Pokémon Pinball Ruby and Sapphire* as an example: not content with providing us with a simple-but-highly playable pinball game, they've included all 200 Pokémon from the two new best-sellers for you to collect while you're knocking the Poké Ball about. *NOM UK* has dissected each of the tables to give you a little taster of what your thumbs have got to contend with come November.

No doubt about it, the *Ruby* table is by far the better of the two. There's more to see, both in terms of Pokémon and the range of bumpers and flippers. The *Sapphire* table is strangely sparse in comparison. Whatever the table Spink acts as the spring down in the bottom-right of the table, so give him a ping and it's into the action.

The controls are as simple as always with **A** acting as the right flipper and **B** the left. **L** and **R** bump the table and it's possible to rescue a ball that goes down the sides by bumping it back onto the flipper, just like the real deal. The ball moves quite realistically and it's easily brought under control with clever use of the flippers, again just like if you were playing a real table.

But unlike everyday pinball, the aim isn't simply to whack the ball around the table and accumulate points; you've gotta choose your shots carefully and light up the bonuses, allowing you to unlock new Pokémon. Then it's just a case of catching them by boshing the critters with the ball.

Within a few minutes of playing you can rack up a handsome score and start unlocking the mini-games where you get to cause serious injury to more Pokémon like Kecleon and Duskull. You'll also get to battle Groudon and Kyogre and catch them if you're good enough.

"The *Ruby* table is by far

Bonus Rounds



RUBY:
Yeah, Kecleon, you'd BETTER be scared...

SAPPHIRE:
Smack Kyogre in the face with that Poké Ball to win





the better of the two.”

What's not so good about *Pokémon Pinball Ruby and Sapphire* is the choice of Pokémon out there on the tables. It's nice to see such a range, but where are the real mascot characters that fans want to see like Treecko and Mudkip? The selection seems wholly random and many *Pokémon* devotees are going to be disappointed that their favourite creatures have been hidden elsewhere.

What's also sad to see is that there are only two tables. Why aren't there more? There's so much to draw from *Ruby and Sapphire*, with different regions from Mossdeep City to Meteor Falls and the many different types of Pokémon that it would be nice to see a few more tables make it into the game.

Aside from the gripes this looks like being an absorbing and well-put-together game that's more than just a simple pinball title. The ball physics are excellent and you're quickly sucked into the Pokémon-collecting. We like it already, but it's gonna be too late to add more tables.

Essentials

The developer is...
HAL Laboratories

They've done... *Pokémon Pinball* (Issue 97, 94%), *SSBM* (Issue 117, 90%), *Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land* (Issue 132, 75%)

Multiplayer is... not here

Connectivity is... also absent

The publisher will be...
Nintendo

It's out in... November 14th

We'll be reviewing it...
two issues time

First Impression

Bags of depth, but not enough tables. It feels like something's being held back.

NOM UK
Predicts

75%+

■ **Isn't this just ordinary pinball dressed up in Pokémon colours?**

Yes and no. You hit the ball around the table collecting bonuses and lighting up multipliers just like a regular pinball game, but then the *Pokémon* angle comes into play where you have to collect Pokémon by highlighting the Get option and then catch the little beasts.

■ **Surely you can't evolve them in this game though?**

Yes you can. Light the Evo lane and you can choose to evolve a Pokémon from your collection. Then it's just a case of

all transferred to the Pokédex that you can access from the Main Menu. Here you can take a look at the Pokémon that you've collected and even the ones you didn't manage to catch.

■ **But there are only two tables?**

Sadly yes. This appears to be the game's biggest shortcoming. There's a table each for *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, but with 200 Pokémon and a wealth of Types, towns and trainers it would've been much nicer to see more variety.

■ **The best thing in the game?**

At first it seems like an ordinary pinball

title, but I was quite surprised to find all of the mini-games hiding in there, too. This is a definite strong point to the game as you get the impression that you're hitting the ball around for a specific reason other than points.

■ **... and the worst part?**

Two tables just isn't enough really, especially when you could have got the whole of Hoenn to mess around in. I would've preferred to see tables from different regions of the map or containing specific Types of Pokémon. There should be at least another three tables in here I reckon.



Trust me, I've played it

Pokémon Pinball on the good old Game Boy Color was a truly stunning game and this Game Boy Advance version looks like it's going to set the same high standards. I certainly had fun playing it, but the repetitive collecting began to get on my tits after a while.



Linking Links

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA:
FOUR SWORDS

It's four-player. It's got Link. It's just like *Four Swords*! But it's on GameCube. Confused?

A four-player session of *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords* starts off with the best intentions; you and three others setting off on a classic Super NES-style *Zelda* quest, all controlling a different coloured Link and committed to being the tightest team you can imagine. What's the phrase? 'All for one and one for all.' It seems pretty apt at the beginning, but before long you're stashing away booty while your 'team-mates' aren't looking. It starts off with the odd gem and one or two useful items. But before long you're nabbing anything that isn't nailed down.

It works like this. While you're wandering in the open you're all on the TV screen, so you can all see each other. Because everyone has to move in the same direction to get to the next bit of screen it's hard to lose someone. That's unless you decide to duck inside any of the countless houses, caves, tunnels and chambers. Because when you do you're transported there, except now your character is only visible on your GBA screen. So if you see a chest, spot a weapon or see an item just sitting there waiting to be picked up there's no-one stopping you



"Before long you'll be nabbing anything that isn't nailed down."



It won't stay this quiet for long. As soon as it starts they'll be nicking stuff and beating up the purple-wearing Link

from grabbing it. And all the while your team will be standing around, scratching their heads and wondering where you are.

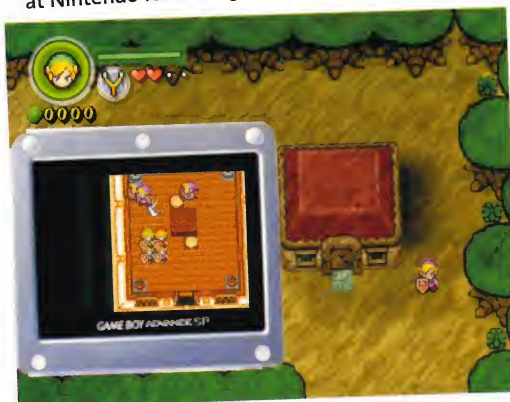
But that's kind of the point and the beauty of the game; everyone wants to bag the most stash and kill the most enemies, because that's what decides who wins. But at the same time you do have to work as a team, otherwise you won't be able to open dungeon doors and beat the real bad-ass bosses, most of which are tough enough to need multiple Links to defeat.

Then there's block pushing. Many of the puzzles are designed so everyone has to fulfil a role, whether it's pushing blocks, flicking switches or seeing off enemies. So you're constantly caught between doing what's right for the team and looking after numero uno.

It's genius to be sure, but unless you've got the kit, including three people committed to completing a *Zelda* quest together, it's going to seem a tad expensive getting set up. Plus, the pumped-up Super NES-style graphics might appear primitive to some, especially those used to *The Wind Waker*. Still, you've got to credit the ever-inventive people at Nintendo for having the guts to try it.



Once in a dungeon the action switches to your Game Boy Advance



Home-sweet-home. Is that Link's hut from *A Link to the Past*?

Essentials

The developer is... Nintendo
They've done... *A Link to the Past* (Super NES), *Link's Awakening* (Game Boy), *The Wind Waker* (GameCube)
Multiplayer is for... 2-4 players
Connectivity is... the whole point of the game
The publisher will be... Nintendo
It's out in... 2004
We'll be reviewing it in... an issue next year

Predicted score

Yes, it's perhaps a bit niche but there's no doubting this game's top-dog pedigree, or the fun that can be had scrapping for treasure with three other Links.

NOM UK
Predicts

80%+

Bowser's your pal?!

Don't get us wrong, classic Mario games are A-okay with us, in fact we thrill at their very presence. But there's nothing wrong with giving people an original Mario game and there's certainly nothing wrong with partnering Mario with his brother, Luigi. That's double A-okay. And what makes it a triple-whammy is the news that it'll be out soon, with Nintendo giving it a firm release date of November 21st.

Mario and Luigi is shaping up to be a really quirky and fun action-orientated RPG in the mould of *Super Mario RPG* on Super NES and *Paper Mario* on N64. The story, typical of a Mario game, begins with the two brothers rushing to the aid of Peach, who's had her voice stolen by a witch, only to bump into Bowser, who – incredibly – offers to help. On the way, the brothers are separated from Bowser, meaning they have to save Peach between them. And this is where it starts getting interesting.

At the start, both Mario and Luigi are limited to simple jump attacks. Each can jump independently of the other, using the **A** and **B** buttons, and this ability comes to the fore time and again to solve puzzles, and beat challenges and enemies.

You first encounter this while taking part in a rope-skipping challenge. It's not super hard, but it does alert you to the possibility of some really quick and punishing tests of co-ordination and the importance of using the pair as a team.

After the first test they should be off and jumping in tandem like synchronised swimmers out for a stroll; jumping over and onto beasts blocking your way, all animated so beautifully it comes as a shock that this game isn't being developed by Nintendo. Later on the brothers learn to stand on each other's shoulders to deliver special attacks. Mario's lets him hover over gaps while Luigi can bounce on Mazza's head to reach higher ledges (don't you just hate it when younger brothers do that?).

MARIO AND LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA



An original GBA game with Mario and Luigi? Cool!

A large part of the quest is building up the mighty duo's powers. This is done by seeing off creatures and battles mix turn-based attack selection with on-the-fly modifications that can either totally cock up your attack or make it devastating. We noticed this mainly on the Hammer Attack, with poorly timed button presses resulting in the hammer falling apart and well-timed attacks stealing tons more Health Points. The version we played only had two attacks, with a Stomp move joining the Hammer, but we're confident that, as you progress, new moves are learnt to take on the tougher bosses.

So far so good. There's every reason to think the mixture of an easy-to-use combat system and real-time battle elements means this could be a quest right up there with *Paper Mario* and that's no faint praise.



"This could be a full-on Mario and Luigi Christmas."



Essentials

The developer is...
Alphadream Corporation
They've done... *Tomato Adventure* (GBA)
Multiplayer is for... games not called *Mario and Luigi*
Connectivity is... also absent
The publisher will be...
Nintendo
It's out on... November 21st
We'll be reviewing it in...
two issues time

Predicted score
It's an original Mario and Luigi game for Game Boy Advance and there aren't too many of them, so this is definitely one to watch, with plenty of invention and amusement on show.

NOM UK Predicts **80%+**

By Dean Scott.
Additional words
by Chris Kohler.

Nintendo® FIGHT CLUB

You don't talk about it, but you must have thought about it. Who is the hardest of them all?

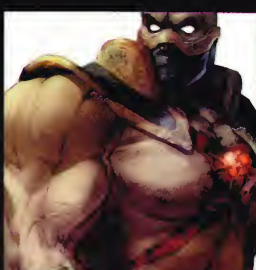
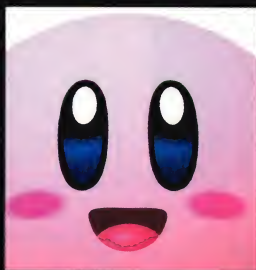
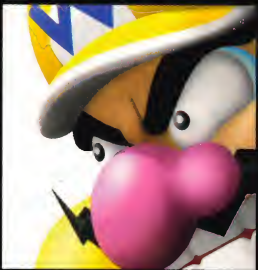
The Rules of Fight Club

1. Do not talk about Nintendo Fight Club
2. DO NOT talk about Nintendo Fight Club
3. Someone yells stop, goes limp, or has an empty power bar, the fight is over
4. Only two characters to a fight
5. Can use approved special moves and abilities
6. Cannot use invincibility moves or any combat vehicle
7. Fights will go on as long as they have to
8. If this is your first time at Nintendo Fight Club, you have to fight

The 32 contestants

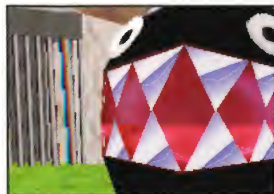
You must have at least considered it. Who is the hardest out of Mario and Sonic? Could Bowser take down Ganondorf? Using the kind of science you can't argue with, we decide once and for all who is the biggest gangsta in the Nintendo universe. The one rude boy who can lay the smack down on all the others.

We've got Pokémon, fighting game characters and classic Nintendo icons past and present. It's going to get nasty. The draw for each round is random and the loser goes home. Flip the page and it all kicks off. Let's FIGHT!



FIRST ROUND: So many fighters, it's a war zone

THE FOX AND THE HOUND!



Fox McCloud vs Chain Chomp

Fox parks up his Arwing, but while he's checking the central locking has deployed okay Chain Chomp munches his pal Slippy down in one! Fox is pissed off, and the fight is on. Climbing on the Arwing, Fox looses off a series of vicious laser blasts. With a clank and some pretty lighting effects, these ricochet off Chain Chomps metal body. He's chained

to a post in the middle of the ring, but doesn't seem to have a weakness. It's death or glory for Fox, and he runs at the Chomp to avenge his toad buddy. With a clanking of teeth and much flying fur, it's over. Fox is in pieces. Chomp is unharmed.

WINNER: CHAIN CHOMP

THE BLOCK AND THE ROCK!



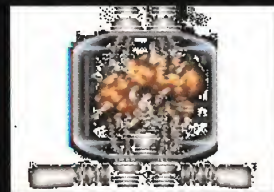
L-shaped Tetris block vs The Rock

The Rock stands in the ring. Pumping up the crowd. Doing that thing with his eye. His opponent is nowhere to be seen. He is shouting into the mic how he's going to "build that Tetris block's ass into a fireplace". But wait! A shadow in the ring! Getting bigger! The Rock looks up, but it's too late! Crushed under a falling L-block. Turns out they're a lot bigger

than they look on the Game Boy. And utterly silent. The Rock is trying to kick out, but the Tetris block rotates so one of the sharp bits is wedged into The Rock's funny eye! The pain! It's a tap out. And the Tetris block rules the ring.

WINNER: L-SHAPED TETRIS BLOCK

LINK TO THE FUTURE!



Link vs Mother Brain

It takes a while to wheel in Mother Brain and assemble her pod. In the meantime, Link stops the moon crashing into the world so the tournament can continue. Finally, we're ready. The beautiful Mother Brain is in her jar. Link is surprised he has to fight a thing in a jar. He usually keeps fairies in jars. That's a BIG jar. The dream would be over for Ganon if he could get

that jar on his side. But before Mother Brain can start chucking fire around, Link Pegasus-Boots it over and clatters into the rig. The jar wobbles and Mother Brain flops out onto the floor. Chain Chomp darts over and gobbles up all the mess.

WINNER: LINK

ATTACK OF THE HELMETS



Captain Falcon vs Mega Man

That wrong turn on p80 was the stupidest thing Captain Falcon ever did. He parks up his trusty Blue Falcon and goes to see what the commotion is all about. Mega Man is waiting for Darth Vader. He doesn't know what Vader looks like. He only knows he also wears a helmet and ends up opening fire on Falcon. Falcon doesn't like this much, but

he's used to speed. He sees these lasers in slow motion. He dodges through easily and, using his *Super Smash Bros. Melee* kung-fu, smashes the little blue guy miles out of the arena. He goes to get back in his ship, but is persuaded to stay on and fight.

WINNER: CAPTAIN FALCON

THE REF HITS BACK!



Mario vs Nick Bruiser

Much to everyone's shock, Mario comes into the ring at normal size in a referee's uniform. Not Super. No raccoon suit. That's supreme confidence. Mario is the only fighter with a trainer, an odd-looking guy who goes sort of translucent green when you see him from the back. Bruiser looks ready to kill. He's going to Super Punch Mario's brains out. It's on.

Mario is counter-punching like Muhammad Ali. It's like he knows every move Bruiser will make. And now Bruiser's getting dizzy. Mario busts out a Special Uppercut. And again. It's a knockout inside 14 seconds! Did Mario cheat? Who's the green guy?

WINNER: MARIO

SAM VERSUS SAM!



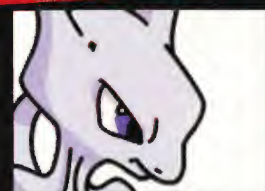
Samus Aran vs Sam Fisher

It begins with a flash as a chemical flare goes off. Samus Aran staggers back and Fisher is gone. Samus looks around. No sign. A single sniper shot hits her in the chest and she falls to the deck. But now she switches her Scan Visor on. Fisher is doing splits in the narrow alleyway where the toilets are. It really mings down there because Donkey Kong

dropped a right stinker. Fisher doesn't know Samus knows where he is. Ice Beam! A frozen Fisher crashes to the floor. Inside the ice, his expression changes to horror as Samus' gun starts to flash and rumble. Charge Beam! Goodnight, sweet prince.

WINNER: SAMUS ARAN

MORTAL KOMBAT!



Mewtwo vs Kano

The pre-fight interviews are revealing. Mewtwo doesn't talk. Words seem to fill the air, but his mouth doesn't move. That's unsettling. Kano from *Mortal Kombat* is pretty single minded: "I'm gonna rip his heart out!". He's clearly banking on Mewtwo a) having a heart and b) it being in the same place a human's would be. Of course, being

Psychic, Mewtwo knows the plan anyway. The fight is less eventful. Mewtwo Psychic Blasts Kano so hard he rips his own heart out. It's still beating, which doesn't usually happen on the Nintendo version. Kano is too busy gargling blood to notice.

WINNER: MEWTWO

STERIOD SHOWDOWN!



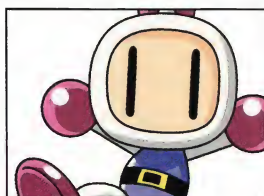
Max vs Donkey Kong

Whereas Tetris blocks are revealed to be really, really massive in real life, Max from *Advance Wars* remains a diminutive one inch tall. The organisers are kind of embarrassed by this, but decide to let Max command two Neo Tanks to make up for it. Unfortunately for Max, these are tiny as well. They fire on the monkey and it's like when you

throw Tic-Tacs at your mate: it's going to need to be a freakishly good shot to kill him outright. Sadly Max doesn't manage it and he is crushed into oblivion by a pixelated barrel. Kong grabs Nell and Sami and climbs up into the rafters. It's unclear why.

WINNER: DONKEY KONG

COMBO VERSUS BOMBO!



TJ Combo vs Bomberman

Fascinating. A *Killer Instinct* boxer, whose massive combos can annihilate you before you've drawn breath, and a tactical pyromaniac with lots of bombs. There's nowhere to hide in this arena though. Bomberman's clearly grabbed some roller-skates, because TJ can't catch him. Bomberman's usually sound tactic of dropping bombs either side of an

enemy isn't working. Combo just dodges up and down. That's when it occurs to Bomberman. Combo is locked to that 2D axis. Bomberman saunters over, and drops one bomb. All TJ can do is shuffle away sideways. It's not enough. The explosion leaves a disgusting mess.

WINNER: BOMBERMAN

THE RUNAROUND!



Sonic the Hedgehog vs King Boo

The combatants are face to face. The bout starts. Boo clutches his diminutive arms over his face. He seems frightened of the hedgehog. Sonic turns away smugly and Boo suddenly turns evil. Big, big teeth, threatening face. He crashes into Sonic's back and rings spill out everywhere. It's tragic. Before Sonic can retrieve them, Wario's been in and had

them all away. He's such a thieving gypsy. Sonic faces Boo. He hides. Turns away. He attacks. Using super speed, he starts to circle Boo. Boo's arms are moving onto and away from his face so quickly he starts to float away. Sonic wins by ring out.

WINNER: SONIC

TIE OF THE ROUND!



Ganondorf vs Solid Snake

Solid Snake is on the radio to his commander. He wants to know what port he has to plug the Wavebird into to defeat Ganon. But what is this? The commander is working for Ganon? Ganon is actually Snake's lost brother? Who are The Patriots? Otakon! What have you got to say about all this? The conversation rumbles on for a good

15 minutes. Snake lights up a cigarette. His health starts to drop, teaching the kids an important lesson. Ganon is bored with all the messing about. He walks up behind Snake and smashes his head clean off with his sword. "Snake? Snaaaaaake?!"

WINNER: GANONDORF

FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE!



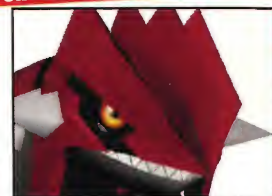
Bowser vs Ryu

Bowser breathes fire. He supposes that this will scare Ryu. Thing is, Ryu's seen all this before. Dhalsim, Yoga Flame, 1991. He doesn't find it impressive. Ryu stays well out of range and Bowser isn't used to long-range battles. Ryu busts out a fireball to unsettle him. Bowser then chucks out a stream of hammers, but these arc harmlessly into the gap

between the combatants. Ryu yawns and does another fireball. Bowser wishes he had his flying clown head with all the Koopas inside with him. He could sure use it now. Ryu ducks under the hammers and Dragon Punches Bowser's scaly chin! Adios Bowser.

WINNER: RYU

OH MAN! THAT'S JUST CRUEL!



Groudon vs Kirby

It's a tantalising match-up: a giant, Godzilla-like Poké-behemoth versus pink puff ball. There is absolutely no way Kirby can win. He carries no threat. There is nothing he can suck up. Groudon is too big to get into his mouth. Kirby floats under Groudon and up his back and starts to suck on his neck. He's hanging off Groudon like a bad pimple,

and proud Groudon sees his reflection in a window. Is that Poké-acne? He'd given Meowth a wedgie for exactly the same thing this morning. Angry, he summons all his power to pop it. Kirby moves. Groudon ends up smashing his own spine. Whoops.

WINNER: KIRBY

BATTLE OF THE BAD BOYS!



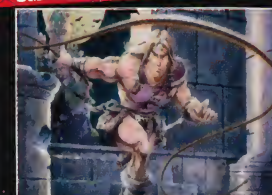
Astaroth vs Wario

Looking up at the ten feet of killing machine that is Astaroth, Wario realises he made a big mistake. Prior to *Wario World*, he couldn't be killed. If he burned his ass that hurt for sure, but Astaroth's gleaming axe of death made him long for those better days. Clunk! Astaroth's axe smashes into the floor, and Wario is running around screaming like a woman.

He tries a charge attack, but bounces off Astaroth. The axe man lumbers after Wario scowling. Wario is so scared he soils himself, which proves to be the turning point. The stench is disgusting. It drains Astaroth's health like holding the Soul Edge.

WINNER: WARIO

SMASHED INTO 16-BITS!



Simon Belmont vs M. Bison

A cracking 16-bit battle in prospect. *Castlevania* hero Belmont is tasty as hell with a whip and M. Bison was the *Street Fighter II* über-boss. It starts badly for Belmont. While he's trying to break stone walls open to see if there's meat inside Bison does a Scissor Kick into the back of his head, following up with a Head Stomp. Belmont's power bar is

drained. He doesn't seem to have an answer to the assault. But as Bison winds up the Psycho Crusher move, Belmont springs into action, thrashing with the whip. Bison spins to Earth, confused. He isn't getting up. Belmont whips more rocks for health.

WINNER: SIMON BELMONT

JAPAN'S POSTER BOYS!



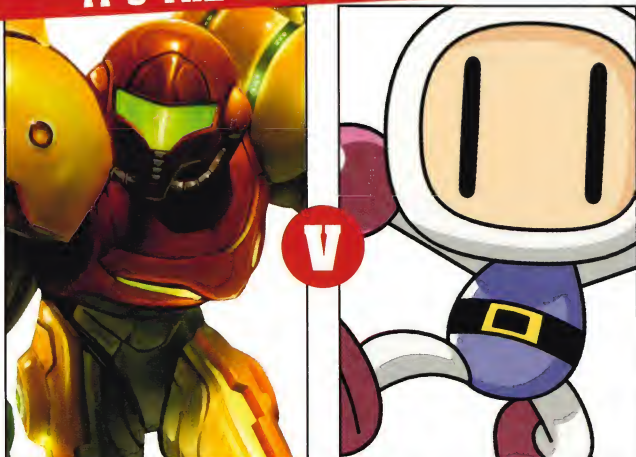
Pikachu vs Mitsurugi

Pikachu riles *Soul Calibur*'s samurai killer straight away by making stupid squeaking noises. This is forbidden in the Hagakure samurai code. Mitsurugi edges towards Pikachu, sword drawn, eyes burning with samurai focus. Pikachu thinks this would be good time to get his surfboard out and starts to pretend surf. Mitsurugi is drawn in and...

THUNDERSHOCK! With a scream of "PIKAAA!", the little yellow guy charges into Mitsurugi, who assumes a defensive stance. Pikachu loses a cheek. Little yellow Pika is turning redder and redder by the second as blood streams down his face. The ref stops it. The crowd boos.

WINNER: MITSURUGI

IT'S THE BOMB!



Samus Aran vs Bomberman

Bomberman gets off to a flyer, surrounding Samus with bombs. He is sure he's scored the fastest win in Fight Club history. Samus drops into the Morph Ball, and the explosions bounce her high into the air. She lands and rolls out of the Ball in one impressive movement. Bomberman realises immediately that this is a fight he can't win, and runs into the corner of the ring. He places two bombs that will kill him, and a tear swings from his cheek. The explosion tears Bomberman asunder, but rips out a wall. Ironically, it's the little-known power-up *Metroid Fusion SA-X* suit.

WINNER: SAMUS ARAN

ACTION ADVENTURERS!



Simon Belmont vs Link

Link checks with the organisers, and a giant jar full of fairies isn't technically an infringement of Fight Club rules. Belmont is desperately searching for things to whip, despite having a full health bar. The fight starts and Belmont spies the Mother Brain jar. With a crack of his whip, it's smashed into bits and fairies fill the air. Belmont is shocked and surprised that no meat appeared. Link is furious and grabs the whip with his Hookshot. He pulls the Magic Mirror from his pocket and zaps Belmont to the Dark World. He has no Moon Pearl, so becomes a bunny.

WINNER: LINK

THE BAD BOYS!



Ganondorf vs Chain Chomp

Fresh from an easy victory against Solid Snake, Ganondorf is supremely confident. Chomp is an altogether different beast from the last round. Gone is the hyperactive snapping and bouncing. Maybe eating Mother Brain had an effect on Chain Chomp. The fight begins, and Chomp rears up on the chain. He's hanging in the air like a kid's balloon. Ganondorf traps Chomp in a ring of fire and moves in. He summons lightning. Chomp judders and coughs up a fried Mother Brain. Back to his old self, he falls to earth, bashes into Ganondorf and crunches him up.

WINNER: CHAIN CHOMP

PSYCHIC REVELATIONS!

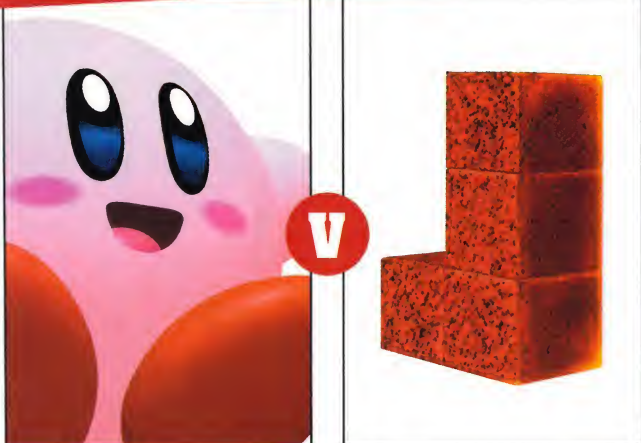


Sonic vs Mewtwo

Sonic has no rings left thanks to thieving Wario, and so knows one hit will kill him. Mewtwo floats down from the sky, and starts to read Sonic's mind. Bread and milk. Some nasty boys kicking him around like a football. Tails cavorting in assless leather hot pants. Sonic's mother comforting him. Wait a second! TAILS IN LEATHER? What the hell is going on here? Mewtwo blurts out "Sonic! Why are you thinking about Tails in a leather outfit?" The hedgehog stops dead in his tracks. His blue body turns bright red to match his shoes. He slinks off embarrassed.

WINNER: MEWTWO

IS THIS A FIX?



Kirby vs Tetris block

Kirby, one of the rank outsiders for the title, manages to draw the Tetris block in the quarters. There's no drop-down assault this time – Kirby was watching The Rock's downfall. Both combatants stand in the ring. The Tetris block rotates a few times. It's clear that, sneak attack aside, he has nothing. Kirby sucks him up quickly, and becomes a block. He also rotates. This isn't working as a fight. Kirby gobs out the block, it spins through the air and lands on a random pile of bricks in the corner. It rotates, slots in, and vanishes. Eh?

WINNER: KIRBY

COSTUME DRAMA!

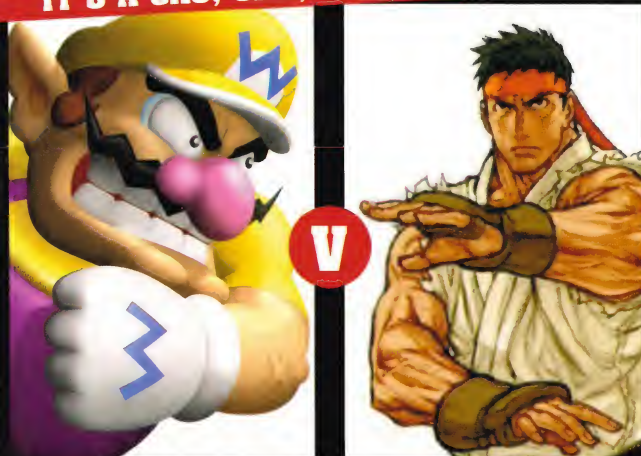


Captain Falcon vs Mario

Oh my God it's cruel! Mario is wearing the Frog Suit. Falcon dashes over thinking his space friend Slippy has been miraculously regurgitated. Mario quickly flips into the Raccoon Suit and tucks the tail away. Now he's pretending to be Fox McCloud! Has this man got any respect for the dead? Falcon aims a karate kick, but quick as a flash, it's the Tanuki Suit! Falcon bounces off stone Mario! Now Mario's got the invisibility cap on! Falcon can't hit him! The metal cap! He looks like the T-1000! The fire flower! He's shooting Falcon in the face! Bam! Bam! Game Over.

WINNER: MARIO

IT'S A GAS, GAS, GAS!



Wario vs Ryu

Ryu tightens his bandanna and strikes a menacing karate stance. "You need to defeat my Dragon Punch to stand a chance." Wario, sensing another stink assault is the only possible way he can win, arrives with baked bean juice all over his face and moustache. "You need to defeat my ass to stand a chance." With a demonic smile, he unbuttons his trousers and bends over. He strains. And he strains. But nothing's happening. Ryu is confused and powers up a fireball. It's inches from hitting Wario when his bowels respond. The fart ignites, and turns Wario into a human fireball!

WINNER: RYU

8 MILE?



Donkey Kong vs Mitsurugi

Mitsurugi speaks little English, but he's clearly not enamoured with the idea of hacking up a monkey. Apes are noble creatures, so Mitsurugi suggests a non-physical bout. An emmcee contest to see who has the dopest lyrical skillz like, innit guy. DK: "My coconut gun can fire in spurts, if shoot ya, it's going to hurt. D! K! Donkey Kong!" Mitsurugi: "Monkey faces me. It smells like death warmed over. I cleave him in two." The judges are unimpressed by the Haiku verse, but DK's N64 flow is tight. The monkey wins, and the samurai is dishonoured.

WINNER: DONKEY KONG

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF



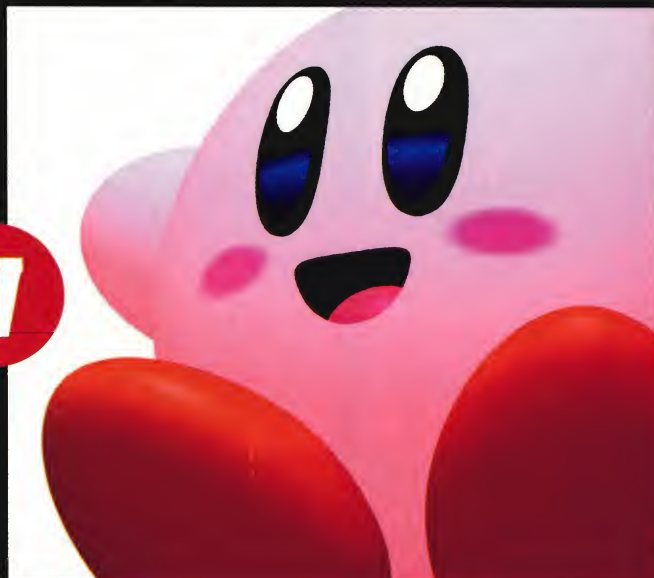
Mario vs Donkey Kong

It's the grudge match the world has waited to see. Donkey Kong knows the weight of history is against him and Mario looks to psyche out the monkey right away. He snatches up Simon Belmont's stray whip and shows it to the monkey: "Remember this, BITCH?". Donkey Kong thinks back. *Donkey Kong Junior*. He's in the cage. His son is trying to save him. His eyes fill with big monkey tears. In a rage, he hurls barrels. Mario can triple jump now, it's all too easy.

Kong jumps to distort the floor slightly, he's getting desperate. Mario butt stomps down with a cage. Oh no.

WINNER: MARIO

THE LUCK RUNS OUT!



Ryu vs Kirby

Kirby's only chance here is to inhale Ryu and steal his skills and the opportunity soon arises as Ryu is tightening his bandanna. Kirby spits Ryu out and the fight is on.

But Kirby is struggling. He's only used to single-button attack moves. He can see rotating D-Pads spinning in his mind, but can't make any sense of it. Ryu moves in and Dragon Punches the Kirbster into the air! Kirby floats back down, winded and totally deflated.

Ryu slips on him like a banana skin and cracks his elbow on the ground. He rolls out and performs a flurry of roundhouse sweeps.

WINNER: RYU

PSYCHIC AGAINST PSYCHO!



Mewtwo vs Chain Chomp

By this point, Mewtwo is feeling confident. He's seen Pikachu nearly bleed to death in round one and also seen Groudon smash his own spine in an act of zit-busting vanity. He can read minds. There is no way he can lose. Chain Chomp bounds in. A brave man hammers in the stake that binds him into the arena. Mewtwo nonchalantly mind reads. But wait! Nothing. He takes a step closer. Nothing. He takes another step. Still nothing. Does Chain Chomp actually have a

brain? No, he doesn't. His metal shell is empty. Mewtwo doesn't realise he's in chomping range. MUNCH!

WINNER: CHAIN CHOMP

BUT WE LIKE THEM BOTH!



Samus vs Link

"LISTEN!" shouts Navi the fairy into Link's ear. "You are going to get your ass KICKED. Saddle up Epona and get the hell out." Samus scans Link. "Small elf boy. Dressed inadequately. No threat." Samus opens up with a stream of Wave Beam fire. Link whips out the Mirror Shield. Samus' futuristic bullets just vapourise it. Link retaliates with a round of Ice Arrows, but Samus quickly frees herself. Link swings to the roof and Samus Grapple Beams after him. Link screams into his

GBA for Tingle's help, but someone's plugged in *Fusion* to get the *Metroid 1* bonus. A Charge Beam blast is heard from miles away.

WINNER: SAMUS ARAN

CAN IT BE STOPPED?



Samus vs Chain Chomp

The consummate bounty killer, Samus has been scouting her semi-final opponent through the rounds and thinks she has spied a weakness. "No-one has seen this thing's ass. I'm going to lock-on, strafe around and there's bound to be a flashing red spot like on the Plated Beetle on Tallon B. I think it's the same family."

The fight commences and Samus breaks out the Ice Beam to try and slow Chomp down. She's blazing away without being locked-on and hitting the chain. Chomp strains against it and it shatters. It's free and

springing relentlessly at Samus. She Grapple Beams into the rafters to take stock. Scan data: What the hell is that thing?! Charge Beam ricochets off its metal body. Wave Beam does nothing. She draws a big comedy mouth on her back, Morph Balls and drops down. Chomp stops dead. What is this? His little brother? Chomps aren't cannibals. Chomp nudges the Morph Ball and it gently rolls. Samus gets dust up her nose and sneezes. Chomps don't sneeze. The Morph Ball gets swallowed whole.



FINALIST NUMBER ONE: CHAIN CHOMP

FIREBALL THROWDOWN!

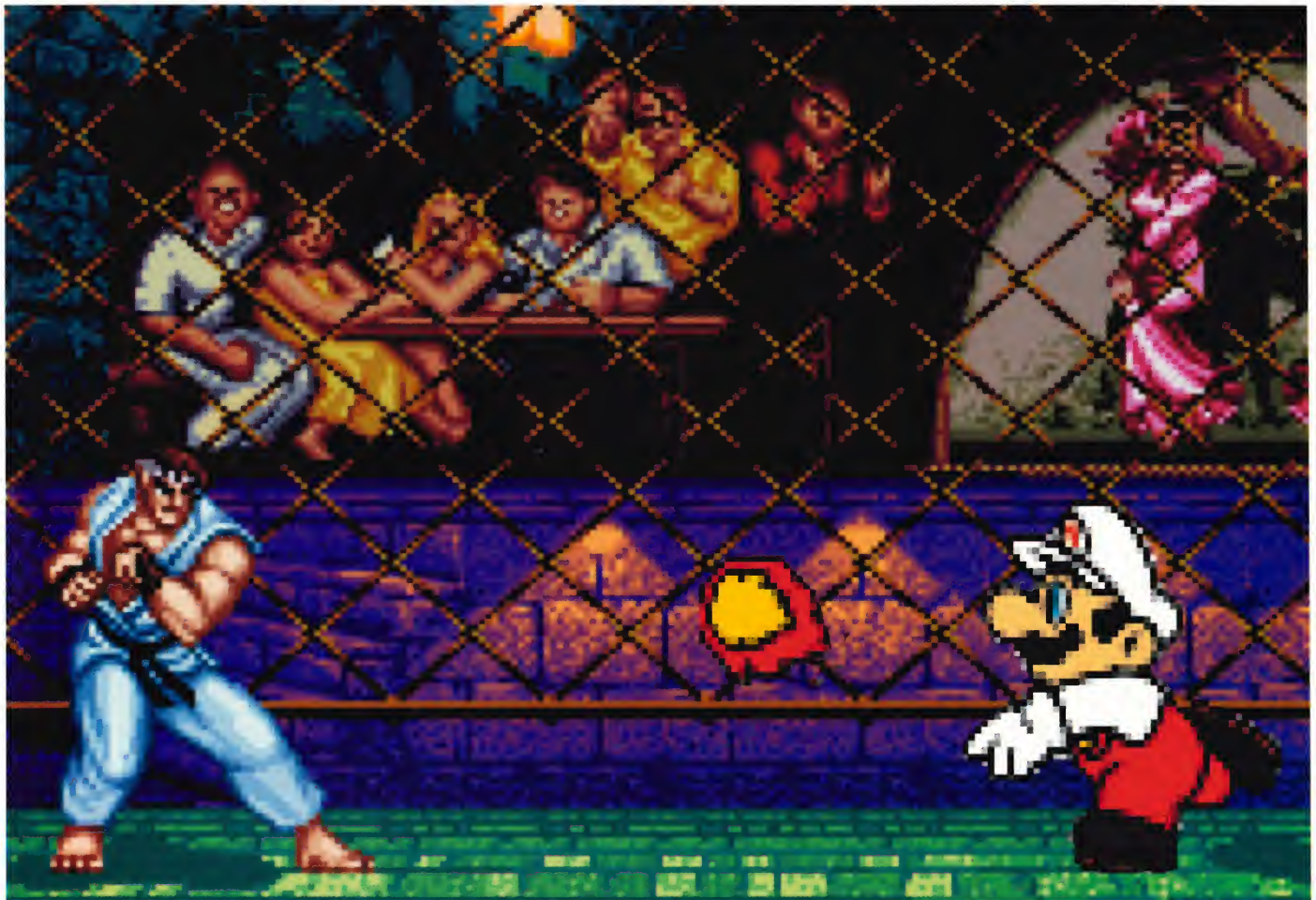


Mario vs Ryu

The pre-fight trash talk is illuminating. Ryu: "You have to defeat my Dragon Punch to stand a chance!" Mario: "You said that last time. Don't you know any other English words?" Ryu: "You did quite well, but you need more training to defeat me!" Mario: "Dude, we haven't even fought yet."

Ryu shows up in his light-blue second suit and Mario wears a white shirt and red overalls. It's clear that Mario fancies a fireball duel and with that the commentator shouts 'FIGHT!'. It starts and Mario

instantly turns and runs to the back of the arena. Ryu looses off a fireball and it travels slowly across the screen. Two men on bikes cycle past behind. A man is doing something to a chicken. Mario checks his watch sarcastically and triple jumps it easily. Mario tosses three fireballs back and Ryu's karate suit catches fire. He quickly initiates a Hurricane Kick in an attempt to extinguish himself, but that just fans the flames. Mario whips out the FLUDD to cool him off, before jumping on his head.



FINALIST NUMBER TWO: MARIO

THE GRAND FINAL!

Mario vs Chain Chomp

For the grand finale, Mario shows up Super. He's seen bullets bounce off Chain Chomp and any amount of flying and swooping is only going to prolong his agony. If he can't butt stomp Chomp's post down and free him, he has no chance. A ring-out is his only chance of success.

Before the fight, Chomp coughs up Samus' Varia Suit and a grim furball made out of Fox McCloud. Mario tiptoes towards his tormentor. He fakes one way. Chomp leaps out and

Mario darts back inside and leaps for the post. Butt stomp! But oh no! Mario's missed it. Chomp's leapt back and chowed half his health away. Chomp cannot be stopped. Mario knows he's going to lose, so decides he might as well get disqualified. He jumps out of the ring, and swoops overhead in an Arwing. "This is a for Fox!" he screams and drops a Nova Bomb. The explosion smashes Chomp over the horizon as if he's been hit with a giant *Mario Golf* club. BOSH!



Mario: "I know I've got 15 years worth of power-ups to call on, but has this thing ever been hurt? I mean, like, ever? I've wasted my time here. Peach is going to do her nut. I was supposed to be washing the car. I need to grab the Poltergust off Luigi on the way home to suck up all the Yoshi droppings on the back seat."



Chomp: "CHOMP-CHOMP-CHOMP, oh, I can stop all that now! I'm the winner! In your face, Mario! You can't get up in MY face, because I'll bite your fat ass clean off. You should have used the Tanuki Suit. That would have cracked my teeth and I would have cried. But you never thought of that did you eh, LOSER?"





WATCH THE SOUND OF MUSIC

KISS



KERRANG!
LIFE IS LOUD



Q



FOX



MUSIC TELEVISION CONTROLLED BY YOU, 24/7.

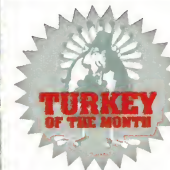


ON SKY DIGITAL, TELEWEST BROADBAND & NTL:HOME

First. Official. Best. Tested

Scores and Awards

90+	Nintendo classic
85-89	Exceptional in its class
80-84	Great fun but not groundbreaking
70-79	Some nice ideas but lacks Nintendo magic
60-69	Few classic moments, for die-hards only
50-59	Been there, seen it, played it. Yawn
40-49	No ideas, no gameplay, no way
30-39	Not worth buying
0-29	Not worth stealing



Turkey of the Month
We know you're mad about Nintendo, so when you see this just think it's as bad as Disney Princess and Universal Studios.



Game of the Month
We'll be awarding this title each issue to the best game regardless of whether it's on GameCube or Game Boy Advance.

p80

F-Zero GX

"Oh my God we're racing Nintendo's fastest-ever game!" Turn the page if you can stand the Gs!

REVIEWS

- p86 *Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising*
- p88 *Super Mario Bros. 3:*
Super Mario Advance 4
- p92 *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004*
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Tournament Edition
- p100 *Space Channel 5:*
Ulala's Cosmic Attack
- p100 *Mr Nutz*
- p100 *Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo*
- p100 *Lego Drome Racers*
- p100 *NHL 2004*
- p100 *Finding Nemo*



Tested

First. Official. Best.

F-ZERO GX

**“I’ve missed
the drive thru!”**

**Forget the Big Mac, boss!
Where we’re going you
won’t have any time to
stop. Feel the power of
the fastest racer of the
year... or maybe ever.**

GAME INFO

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Nintendo

Website: www.nintendo.co.uk

Players: 1-4

Memory: 18 blocks

Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK
CLASSIC

**Oct
31st**



Imagine if you were Captain Falcon, boy what a double-edged sword that would be. Not only would you have to wear a cheesy suit where everyone can see your nipples, but then there's those shoulder pads that'd scare off the hardest of quarterbacks. But even if you were wearing The Nastiest Body Suit of 2003™ you could just laugh it all off and simply point at your rocket ship.

The Blue Falcon can hit well over 2,000kph, so in full flight he'd be able to burn around the world in about 20 hours. He'd rocket to the shops for a pint of milk and be back before you could blink. So how is this astonishing sense of speed translated to your GameCube? If we were to say supersonic it wouldn't even come close, so read on to learn more about the wildest ride you'll ever experience on Nintendo's purple box of power.

TURN OVER! >>
For shots and info



Tested

First. Official. Best.

➤ Let's face it, you'd rather have your eyes gouged out with a blunt spoon than play any racer on GameCube. The only exception to the rule is the *Burnout* series and we know that Nintendo won't balls-up *Mario Kart Double Dash* unless they're insane. *Rally Championship*, *V-Rally*, last year's stupid motocross games – they're all

shocking and not worthy of the Seal of Quality stamped on the boxes. Thankfully *F-Zero*'s here to eat up your gaming hours come the end of October.

The first half an hour saw us dying on our ass six times. Then we died on our ass a seventh time just to hear the commentary call us a 'retard'. It actually says 'retire', but it's a close call. R.O.B the Robot

towered above us, sand monsters the size of cities jumped out of nowhere and massive electric storms lit up the track in front of us. You will forget all about that leap into thin air that's just around the corner. Smash! 'Retard'.

Actually describing *F-Zero* on paper is a tough thing and these static screenshots just don't do the game anywhere near the

kind of justice it deserves. *GX* wipes the floor with *F-Zero X*; the N64 version now feels like a Sunday afternoon drive. Go back and play it and you'll see what we mean.

The GameCube version is so fast we even had to pause the race on Lightning 1 just to catch our breath and refocus our eyes. They actually hurt. Not many games can put that on their cv,



"GX wipes the floor with *F-Zero X*; the N64 version now feels like a Sunday afternoon drive."



■ Don't be afraid... accelerate into the unknown



■ We're gonna puke! Fortunately this track is already the colour of sick



■ Charge up your craft, just like the old times



Watch out for the...

As if 29 drivers, leaps into thin air and the need to finish first wasn't enough, *F-Zero GX* features plenty of hazards littered about the place...



■ Gravel: It slows you right down



■ Ice: Slippery. Obviously.



■ Traps: Hit one – you'll land at the back.



■ Jump pad: Cut corners or fall to your doom.

All the tracks, nearly

That's right, race fans! Here's a look at all the tracks in Grand Prix mode.

■ Grand Prix mode is divided up into four Cups. There's one more to open up, the AX Cup, but you'll need to defeat the previous four events (Ruby, Sapphire, Emerald and Diamond) on Extreme mode to unlock it.

And for anyone who's been living in a cave for the last few months, AX Cup is the coin-op game that won't be appearing in UK arcades. We tried our hardest, but it's just too damn tough, even for Jackson who's a gaming ninja.

RUBY CUP



■ Mute City 1:
Sprawling highways!



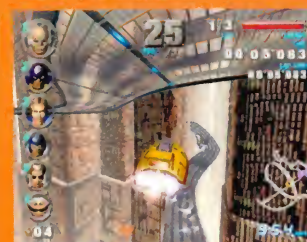
■ Vegas Palace 1:
Casinos and road splits!



■ Sand Ocean 1:
Sand monsters and sharks!



■ Lightning 1:
Massive electrical storms!



■ Aeropolis 1:
Traps and enormous jumps!

SAPPHIRE CUP



■ Big Blue 1:
Atlantis cityscapes!



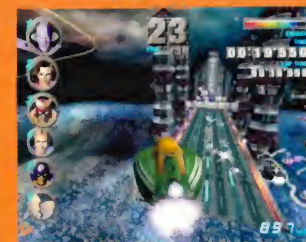
■ Port Town 1:
R.O.B the Robot!



■ Green Plant 1:
Central pits and high banks!



■ Port Town 2:
Ride inside tubes!



■ Mute City 2:
Explosive jump pads!

EMERALD CUP



■ Fire Field 1:
Ride outside tubes!



■ Green Plant 2:
Ride vertical tubes!



■ Vegas Palace 2:
High-speed cross-overs!



■ Lightning 2:
Ride on the wet!



■ Big Blue 2:
90° high-speed turns!

DIAMOND CUP



■ Cosmo Terminal:
Three lanes, no sides!



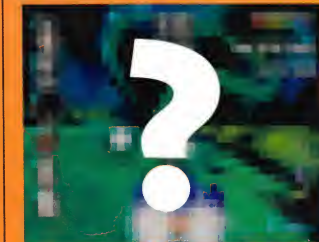
■ Sand Ocean 2:
Dead ends!



■ Fire Field 2:
No edges! Aaaaargh!



■ Aeropolis 2:
Three-tier jumps!



■ Phantom Road:
That'd be spoiling it!



although *Aero Gauge* did once upon a time – but that was through the sheer pain of playing it; ex-Dop Ed, Shaun White ended up in A&E.

But back to *F-Zero GX*; is it the killer game you've all been waiting for? Hell yeah! Some of the ships do tend to slip out too easily, even those with an average C rating and some of the music – especially the tune on Vegas Palace 1 – just isn't in keeping with the pounding tracks you'd expect from such a game.

But these are just minor moans. There haven't been that many GameCube games we've wanted so badly since *Zelda* and that was way back at the beginning of May. This summer's been pretty barren in terms of top-quality GameCube titles and to finally see *F-Zero GX* on the horizon makes us even happier that this will be just the start of a great Christmas for Nintendo fans – and so much better than the last one.

The much-anticipated Story mode is just what the series needed and the learning curve will have you winning straight away then spending over 30 goes trying to complete the tougher challenges later on. But if it was just the Grand Prix mode and the same old options like Time Attack thrown in *F-Zero GX* wouldn't have scored this much.

The Story mode is perfect if you're playing on

Too fast? Too furious?

Learn how to cheat properly with our *F-Zero GX*-busting tips, starting on p108



■ We haven't just got the first official review of *F-Zero GX*, we've got some wicked tips to help you bust the hardest parts, too. Starting on p108 we'll tell you how to blast through Diamond Cup with ease and show you how to reach speeds of up to 2,400kph.

"The GameCube version is so fast we even had to pause the race on Lightning I, just to catch our breath and let our eyes refocus."



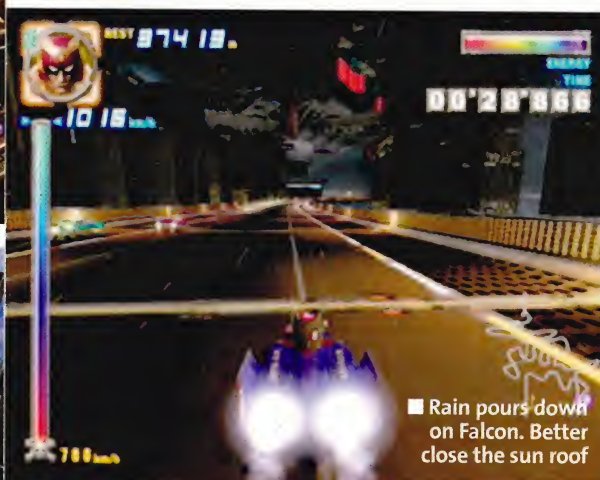
■ What Saruman's doing in the lead we don't know... get up front and burn him



your own and you'll keep trying just to move deeper into the game. There are some awesome cut-scenes, but the challenges that await you are the most intriguing things. One race sees you bombing through a canyon as massive boulders come crashing down and you've got to stay on the track, miss the rocks and finish first. Anakin Skywalker didn't have to put up with that lot when he raced through a canyon!

Get good at Story mode, Time Attack and Grand Prix and you'll earn points to open up new Story chapters or buy ship parts in the shop and customise your very own rocket ship. As we reported last month you can even put Nintendo icons on your invention, including AiAi, Mario and even a NES pad. Now that's the Nintendo difference.

For us though the final track in Diamond Cup is the highlight of an awesome game. It's not Rainbow Road like last time, but a psychedelic, brain-melting blast as you hammer around loops and sweeping bends on a course that's unparalleled in any Nintendo racer we've ever played. It's the tits and the icing on the cake for a speed fest we've waited over a year to play. Scientists will argue otherwise, but we reckon you'll be reaching speeds of 2,000kph as you charge down the high street on your way to bagging a copy. And even at 11.04pm when I finished this review, I still went back and had another go. That's the secret ingredient that turns a really good game into a Nintendo classic. **Tim**



■ Rain pours down on Falcon. Better close the sun roof

■ Apparently this is perfectly normal... we're not so sure



■ Down the tubes. End up 14th and you'll be flushed away with all the other turds



■ Looks like soggy shag-pile, feels like teflon

Now on CBBC...

It's been years since there was a decent cartoon on CBBC. But all that could be about to change...



■ No sooner had we finished writing this review that news appeared on the Net about an *F-Zero* cartoon. Known as *F-Zero: Falcon Tradition*, it will tell the high-octane adventures of Captain Falcon, Michael Chain (the pilot of the Wild Boar), Samurai Goroh and others as they blast around tracks in 2201. To guarantee this is no dog, even Shiggy's been enrolled as an Editorial Supervisor in the run up to its Japanese premier in October. There will even be stationary and action figures doing the rounds! Come on the Beeb, you know you want it!



So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You want to own one of the best games of the year. You'll look a chump if you don't.

No if...

You prefer simulated racers or something that isn't quite as fast... go for an F1 game.

You'll love it if you like...

The *F-Zero* series, speed and a multiplayer mode to keep you racing for months on end.

GRAPHICS

9

Blinding speeds and a futuristic world to die for – this is an astonishing creation.

SOUND

8

Mute City harks back to the N64 and there are some great driving tunes.

GAMEPLAY

9

Instantly playable with sections so tough you'll keep coming back.

LIFE SPAN

6 MONTHS

It'll take ages to unlock everything on Extreme mode. Then there's loads more.

VERDICT

> Pulsating speed and rock-hard challenges make this the racing game to die for. Any doubts you had that this wouldn't live up to expectations can be forgotten. This must be the first game on your Christmas list.



BEST BIT: Hitting 2,000kph for the first time. Oh. My. God.

WORST BIT: Later modes are a bit too insane. You need to be red hot!

SECOND OPINION

> *WipEout*? What's *WipEout*? *Extreme G*? That's a mug's game. *F-Zero GX* is the king. Please leave me alone now. I'm doing Story mode, Chapter Four on Hard setting... Mike

NOM UK'S RATING

92%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

GAME INFO

Price: £29.99

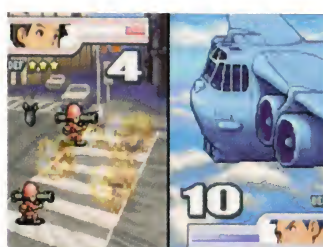
Publisher: Nintendo

Website: www.advancewars.com

Players: 1-4



■ Ah, the old inverted U-shape approach: pretty to look at, but also pretty pointless



Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising

It may be more of an expansion of the original than a sequel, but who are we to complain? If it isn't broke, don't fix it.

➤ The sequel to Intelligent Systems' strategy game is finally upon us. But look, *Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising* appears to be exactly the same game.

Disaster? No, not really. *AW* was and still is one of GBA's best games, with one of the most complete turn-based battle systems ever. Even though it took donkey's years to finish, it was so addictive, we went back time and time again. So, you see, this 'update' is just in time.

The most obvious addition to the *Advance Wars* formula are Neo Tanks – a very powerful

land-based vehicle that is expensive, but strong enough to make it worth every penny. There are also more Commanding Officers in *AW 2*, and you'll have to take command of each of their armies in the Campaign mode, unlike in the original where you stuck to one army throughout the game.

The maps are mainly the same, still sectioned up by squares that are used as the counters for how far a unit can move, and the range of its attacks. The only new feature of the maps is the addition of

pipes that twine round certain stages, and sometimes play a part in the main mission objective. You may be required

to destroy a pipe by attacking its weak point – on a welded joint – to complete the mission.

AW 2 also allows you to create your own battlefields with a Map Editor. These maps can then be saved to cart memory for you to battle on, and even transferred to a friends cart. Get in!

These changes, on the grand scale of things, are small. The graphics are the same, the gameplay is the same and even some of the tunes have been ripped straight from the first game. But even if you've finished the original, we're sure this will hook you into hours of portable warfare, just like before and you'll love every minute. Just beware, if you're looking for an all-new experience you just might be disappointed by this. *Mike*

Oct
3rd

Playing it on the go

Connectivity... b

Plug into GameCube to play in 3D! Not!

Better Back Lit... b

Only if you're blind. Bright, crisp colours.

Multiplayer... a

Gold. Four-players, single and multi-cart.

Save... a

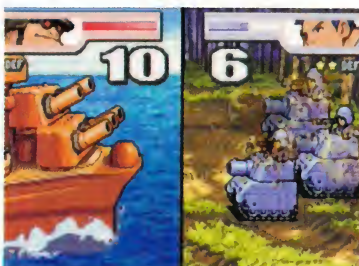
Only one Campaign slot. That's a bit poor.

Extras... a

Plenty of COs to unlock with your points.

Where we played it...

Whenever we had the chance. We even tried playing while driving, but we can't talk about that until it goes to court...



■ Battle ships can attack from safety

■ Massive orange tanks versus small blue ones: war is hell



■ A bit like Pokémon, *Advance Wars 2* is affected by no-diagonal-itis



I've got the power

Advance Wars 2 gives you even more CO abilities to vanquish your foes



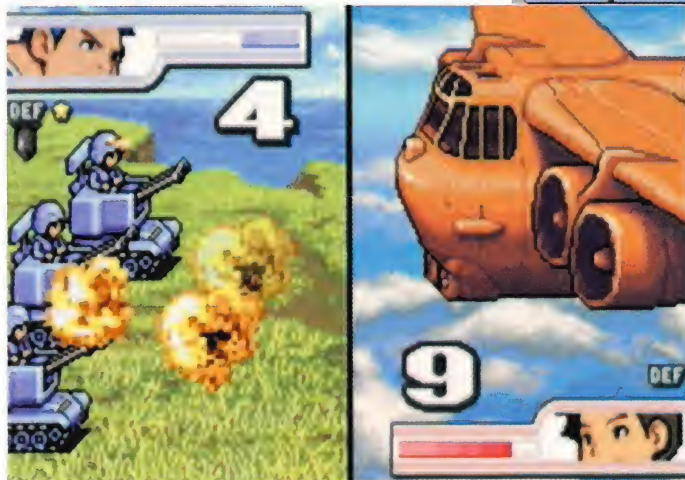
■ Each Officer has two CO Powers instead of one. In the original, players could charge up a special CO Power Bar that, once full, would allow them to unleash a mammoth battle-changing power, like repairing all their units, change the weather or enhance a particular stat for their fighters. In AW 2, you can charge up further to get a Super CO power, which enhances the effect of the normal CO power. Bonus!



■ A fair fight you might think, but look closer, the 'copters on the right are PINK!



Infantry	1000
Mech	3000
Recon	4000
Tank	7000
Mid Tank	16000
APC	5000
Artlry	6000



■ Big bomber crush puny anti-air guns. Roar!

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You are a fan of strategy games, like a challenge, or you simply want more Wars.

No if...

You hate turn-based battles, slow-moving action or having to use your noggin.

You'll love it if you like...

Chess, Advance Wars or even puzzle games. This is strategy in its most hardcore form.

GRAPHICS

8

There's minimal animation, but the sprites are detailed and colourful.

SOUND

8

The gunshots and explosions all sound cool, and the tunes are ace.

GAMEPLAY

10

Faultless. There are so many aspects of battle to consider and it all just... clicks!

LIFE SPAN

6 MONTHS

One of the most addictive games ever, and you'll battle even longer with mates.

VERDICT

► Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising doesn't get stupid and try to mess with perfection. It simply takes what was already pretty faultless and builds on it to give you more of the same brilliance.



BEST BIT: It's very similar to the original – don't mess with a winning formula

WORST BIT: It's really very similar to the original – we want more new stuff!

SECOND OPINION

► This rocks. It's as simple as that. Once you get to grips with Advance Wars 2 it'll seem as though you've slipped into a turn-based coma... in a good way, of course. Kingsley

NOM UK'S RATING


93%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

Super Mario Bros. 3: Super Mario Advance 4



Frog Suits, flying raccoons and Bow-wows. You won't find any other game with this level of genius and innovation. Ever.

 *Super Mario Bros. 3* is unforgettable. It was the game that made Mario, a seemingly unspectacular plumber, into the world-famous superstar he is today. It was one of the best games on the NES and even appeared in the 1999 Guinness Book of World Records after selling a phenomenal 15 million copies worldwide. Bow down to its might, because *Super Mario Bros. 3* is about to make a storming return on GBA and it's as good as ever.

Okay, so this isn't a port of the NES classic, rather of the Super NES remake that appeared in the *Super Mario All Stars* package, but with better graphics and sound, you won't see us complaining. Whether it was re-released on the Super NES or not, one question you may instantly ask is: is this as good as *Super Mario Advance 2* and *3*? After all, *SMB 3* is the oldest game of the three. The simple answer is, yes. The levels

LEFT: There ain't mushroom in 'ere, geddit? Nintendo's fat man has been at the fungus again



GAME INFO

Price: £29.99

Publisher: Nintendo

Website: www.nintendo.co.uk

Players: 1-2



■ Mario's Frog Suit comes without garlic and onions

Tanuki-itis

You know you've played too much *Mario* when...

- You start fuzzing hammers at people
- You have the sudden urge to stomp on turtles
- You try to get money by head-butting bricks
- You eat mushrooms hoping to double in size
- You tie your bed sheet around your neck and try to fly
- You try to slam nails and posts into the floor with your butt
- You staple a raccoon tail to your backside and try to fly
- You walk around in autumn touching leaves, hoping to grow a raccoon tail
- You smash eggs at the supermarket trying to find a green dinosaur
- You count to six, then leap into a flagpole and wait for fireworks



■ Mario does his bit for the worldwide tortoise extinction bid

“*Super Mario Bros. 3* was the game that made Mario, a seemingly unspectacular plumber, the world-famous superstar he is today.”

may be shorter than those of *Yoshi's Island* and *Super Mario World*, but each one contains the same essence of challenge and superb design. *Super Mario Bros.* may have started the trend, but it was the third in the series that defined the genre to near perfection, which following Mario games just built upon.

For the sake of comparison, *SMB 3* is much like *Super Mario World*. Mario has to trawl through eight worlds, on a quest to rescue the Princess from Bowser's dungeon and restore peace to each world by ridding the kings of evil spells cast by the Koopa Kids that've turned them into animals.

If the GBA remakes are the first you've seen of these classics, you'll recognise the Mushroom power-up that makes Mario big,

Playing it on the go

Connectivity... b

None. Don't believe us? Plug it in and see.

Better Back Lit... b

The bright graphics are fine on the GBA.

Multiplayer... a

Alternate play in *SMB 3* plus *Mario Bros.*

Save... a

Four slots and you can save at any time.

Extras... a

We're yet to see the e-Reader functions.

Where we played it...

Everywhere... non-stop. We love Mario games and won't stop until we've subbed Reviews.

the Star for invincibility and the Flower for Fire Ball Mario, all having appeared in *Super Mario Advance 2*. But *SMB 3* gets far more innovative than that. Throughout your adventure, you'll get to use a number of crazy costumes that give Mario different abilities. Collecting a Raccoon Leaf will power-up Mario with the Raccoon Suit, giving him a raccoon tail that he can use to smack enemies and even fly, but he'll have to sprint to pick up speed first. He can also wear a trendy-looking Frog Suit, that'll allow him to swim better and gives him a cheeky little hop when he walks on dry land. Then there's the ultra-cool Hammer Bros. Suit, with the ability to fuzz hammers at any enemies nearby. This suit kicks ass. Hammer. Hammer, hammer,

HAMMER! 'Ave it!

Super Mario Bros. 3 looks great. Instead of the plain black or blue backgrounds of the original, you'll see hills that tower in the distance of in Green Land, or pyramids and dunes in the Desert Land.

Even in the castles and caves, there are detailed walls and bricks in the background, with the odd spider web here and there, all making Mario's world a much more believable place to play in.

The sound quality has been upped a notch too, even improving on the Super NES

**TURN OVER! >>>
For shots and info**



version. All of the level tunes have been remade to a higher quality and a new track has been added for the hidden underground Coin rooms. And just like in the rest of the *Super Mario Advance* games, Mario has been given a voice, shouting 'let's-a-go' and 'mamma-mia' each time he picks up an item or loses a life. The voices are cool, but after you've died for the millionth time – which will happen, believe us – Mario's words will only frustrate you and you'll wish he would just shut his fat, hairy pasta-hole. We love you really, Mario

Luigi is in there too, with the alternate-play option that was in the original. When Mario loses a life, Luigi gets a shot at finishing the level that got the better of his brother, so it's like an alternate-play two-player game. In *Super Mario Advance 2*, Luigi was about as controllable as Phil Mitchell after six pints of Stella. He floats along in the air



■ Mario cheats death again



■ A disguised Saddam prepares to launch his deadly WMD

“After you’ve died for the millionth time – which will happen, believe us – Mario’s voice will pile on the frustration and you’ll wish he would just shut his fat, hairy pasta-hole.”



■ Fully suited and booted, Mario hot foots it over the vicious-looking local flora



The world as it should be...

■ It was Mario games that set the trend for having themed worlds, based on ice, fire, water, desert and the

Let *NOM UK* take you on a brief toadstool tour of Mario's world



Grass Land



Desert Land



Water Land



Giant Land



Sky Land

e-Teaser or e-Pleaser?

We want those e-Reader extras so much we had to find out...

Internet rumours suggested that Nintendo's plans to release the e-Card Reader in the UK had been cancelled. Obviously, this would spell disaster for anyone looking forward to the extra levels, items and replays. But don't fret, readers. We contacted a Nintendo spokesperson who told us: "The launch of the e-Card Reader in Europe has been moved into the first half of 2004". Phew! It's a bit of a wait but GET IN!



One special e-Card will allow you to play the first level from *SMB 1*, but with *SMB 3* physics and power-ups. YES!



■ In real life, hammer throwers are often jailed



■ Mutant plants – that's why we worry about all this genetically-modified food

and skids about like nobody's business. It's rubbish. Fortunately for Luigi fans, in *SMB 3* he moves in exactly the same way as his porky older brother, which is how it should be, right?

SMB 3's transition to Nintendo's handheld has been near-perfectly achieved, but the most important thing is the game has barely aged at all. The level design is spot on and the sheer innovation of the enemies and power-ups is still the best in any game we've ever played. You're reading this review like you don't know this already. It's *Super Mario Bros. 3*! Stop reading and go GET IT! **Mike**



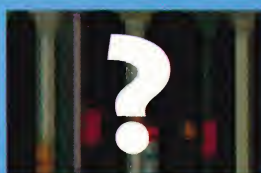
like; a trend that hundreds of games, even today, still follow. The eight worlds of *SMB 3* look great on Game Boy Advance. Check 'em...



Ice Land



Pipe Land



Dark Land

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You're a true Nintendo nut – especially if you didn't play *SMB 3* on NES or Super NES.

No if...

You hate 2D platformers, or played the original versions and can't be bothered again.

You'll love it if you like...

Any game in the *Super Mario Advance* series. This is one of the best Mario games ever.

GRAPHICS

8

We couldn't agree which looks better, this or *Super Mario World*. It's stunning.

SOUND

8

Some of the catchiest Mario tunes ever – you'll be humming them in your sleep.

GAMEPLAY

9

Nigh-on perfect. As close to spot-on as it gets without actually being *SMW*.

LIFE SPAN

25 HOURS

More if you're totally new to Mario. Less if you've finished *SMB 3* before.

VERDICT

> *SMB 3* is over 12 years old now and it's still one of the finest 2D platformers money can buy. We think *Super Mario Advance 2* has a slight edge over this in the control department, but otherwise it's flawless.



BEST BIT: Using any of Mario's awesome power suits. Absolute genius.

WORST BIT: The same old *Super Mario Bros.* game as an 'extra'. Zzzzzzz.

SECOND OPINION

> I don't think this is as good as *Mario Advance 2* or *3*, because the controls aren't up to those high standards. It's still brilliant though and a must for Mario fans. Dom

NOM UK'S RATING

92%



Tested

First. Official. Best.



GAME INFO

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Website: www.tigerwoods2004.com

Players: 1-4

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004

Tiger gives us wood... a one-wood. Then watches as we shank it off the tee.

> Man, golf is SO hip-hop. Respec'. Seeing Colin Montgomery rocking his crazy gold chains around Royal Birkdale and supping Cristal with his biatches is just like watching a P. Diddy video. It's surely the highlight of any rapper's life when he gets to say: "Tiger's swing is authentic, when he slams a major you know he'll win it. Big up the EA Sports, yo!"

What the hell is that all about? Hip-hop. Golf. Compton. St. Andrews. There's no connection there! Oi! Electronic

"The most perfect swing system in golf game history remains untampered with."

Arts! Be content that you've made a fantastic sports game and give the pathetic 'street cred' stylings a break. You know who plays golf? Old men. Not hip young gangsta hoods, but old guys in crap chequered trousers. It's about 'swing' not 'bling'.

If you can block all this unnecessary crap out of your mind, *Tiger 2004* is absolutely cracking. The most perfect swing system in golf game history remains untampered with. Back and forward with the 3D Stick and the ball flies. The real skill is in shot selection, spin, reading the greens... and making a face that looks just like you.

That's the new Game Face

system. There are pages and pages of sliders so you can capture your own unique ugliness for use on your character. If you wear glasses though, you've got a problem. Specs aren't free. They cost ten grand – money you earn by winning tournaments. You'll probably opt to stay blind and grab some of the fly Nike, Adidas and Puma gear they've got in the club shop. That clobber ain't cheap either, but you can't put a price on looking cool, innit guy?

The major additions to the gameplay, along with graphics so sharp they give your eyes papercuts, are the Tour and the Chip. A full Tour means you can raise hell on the PGA Tour for a full ten years, deliberately hitting your ball at spectators and going ballistic like Happy Gilmore.

The Chip is an all-new shot, filling a gap in your arsenal with a cheeky low lob.

There are also seven new courses to make divots on. Bearing in mind a real round at St. Andrews would cost you well over £40, this almost pays for itself. It practically IS golf if you walk to the games shop with a heavy club bag over your shoulder. Or you could get your Fanny to carry them. A lady friend, we mean, like Fanny Sunesson, Nick Faldo's ex-caddy.

What isn't there is the full online play that PS2 gamers will be enjoying. Golf's the perfect online game, because it's not about speed. Of course this is more Nintendo's fault than EA's, but the hard fact is you're not getting the full 2004 experience. Maybe you should write a letter or something. **Dean**

Sept 26th



■ Who said golf was boring? *Tiger 2004* features a new 'strip golf' option



■ Tiger couldn't help but smile after beating the camera man to death with his club



■ Any minute now, AiAi will crash in here and pick up 200 points

Go on, treat yourself

£10,000 for a shirt? Well, it's cheaper than the catalogue I suppose...



■ Golfers win money in tournaments. It sounds incredible, but it's true. In real life they use this money to keep their trophy wives looking pretty, but that's not for you. You can buy better abilities (with special golf drugs, we assume), better gear, or clothes. But get a sponsor and THEY PAY YOU to wear their stuff. Cha-ching!



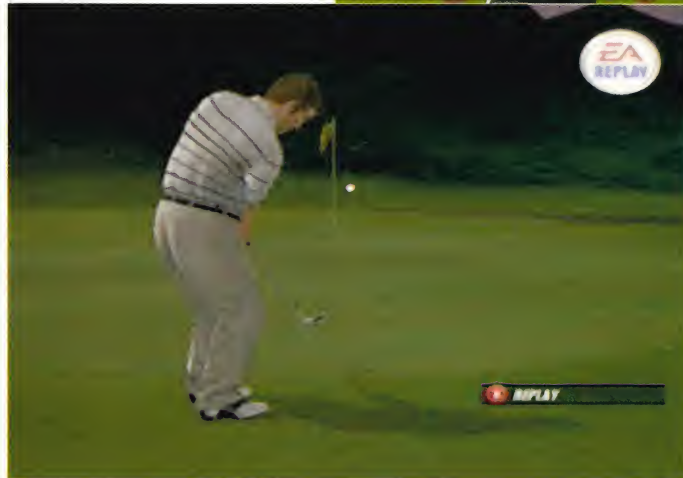
■ As far as we know, this is the first time Dean has ever used a golf course as anything other than a toilet on the way back from the pub



■ You smelt it, you dealt it. Demi Moore reads the wind



■ Get in the hole you little white bastard! Golf gets guttural when **NOM UK** get on the green



So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You like golf. Even if that only extends to watching the final round of the Ryder Cup.

No if...

You're expecting any more than a slight update. It wasn't broke in the first place.

You'll love it if you like...

Making eerie half-clones of yourself that you can zoom right up to on your TV. And golf.

GRAPHICS

8

Razor sharp, with even minor details like sponsor logos on jumpers drawn in.

SOUND

7

We like the Irish commentator, but the American guy is a bit of a tool.

GAMEPLAY

9

You don't even need to like golf at all, this game just sucks you in.

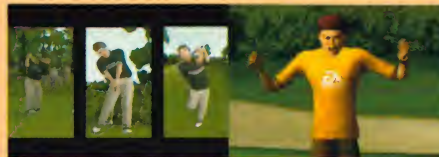
LIFE SPAN

6 MONTHS

The tour will last weeks and you'll keep coming back for more.

VERDICT

► We're not scoring this any higher than the last one. It's better, as you'd expect from a year's 'hard' work, but not amazingly so. It remains the digital golf game of choice and Mario's not likely to better it.



BEST BIT: The swing system. It's absolutely perfect. Really, it is.

WORST BIT: The music. Hip-hop and golf suit each other like jam and gravy.

SECOND OPINION

► More of the same? When it's this good it doesn't matter. *Tiger Woods 2004* shows little evolution over last year's effort, but it's still sweet like chocolate. **Dom**

NOM UK'S RATING

90%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK



Tested

First. Official. Best.

GAME INFO

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Website: www.easports.com

Players: 1-4

Memory: 185 blocks



■ Vandal had ruined the pitch overnight



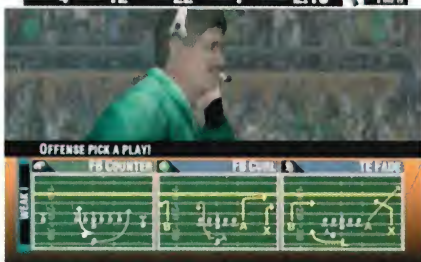
■ Summary... Oakland lose



■ Don't stare at Jeff's claw!



■ There's no way tickling is gonna stop Williams...



■ ... while Wannstedt makes an urgent call to his barber



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK
CLASSIC

Madden NFL 2004

Handball! That's a free kick, ref. FOUL! Come on, ref, that's a straight red. What the hell kind of twisted football game is this?

> The best part of the new *Madden* game is the beginning. Once Elvis Presley jumps out of the spaceship, he finds this gun. It's a gun that fires full-grown dairy cows. Presley fires bovine after bovine across the screen and if you manage to get one into John Madden's mouth he craps out an egg. And then a Yoshi hatches out... and Elvis rides the Yoshi.

These may well be the least-read pages in *NOM UK* this month — nobody cares about American football games. They might if they had pop icons firing cows, but they don't. They have armoured men, little squiggly line diagrams and third downs. The short review is that *Madden 2004* is better than last year's game. Buy it if that sounds good.

It's not massively better, though. In truth, I could take the Pepsi challenge with any 3D *Madden* game and not be able to tell you the year it's from. They're all great games and certainly achieve higher standards in their field than any UK GameCube soccer game.

Part of the reason for this is how American football works. Soccer (God, that sounds

disgusting) is a team game, but Gridiron revolves around the quarterback. That's you, so you're at the centre of everything and even more so here thanks to the Playmaker controls — you can alter the patterns that your receivers will run if your opponent has called a bang-on defensive play.

You get the same control on dee-fence, so you really feel in the game. You're likely to enjoy attacking far more though — it's touchdown passes versus pushing a man so he can't catch the ball — no contest, really. Learning to read the offensive playbooks is simple,

but picking an effective dee-fence is a massive leap for a soccer-loving English brain. Good job you can cheat and 'Ask Madden'.

Off the field, there's plenty going on, too. The tutorials and scenarios that *Madden 2004* serves up explain the sport well. You get to understand strategies at work and why Americans get so worked up about something that, on the surface, looks like rugby for wimps.

The NFL hardcore (we're talking solely to Brad, Chip and Todd

here) will soil their Raiders pyjamas at the Owner mode. It adds a new layer of football manager-style depth, as you

"You get to understand what the Americans get so worked up about."

control every aspect of your team. Fancy paying off your head coach and getting in the no.2 from the Texas Capital Punishers, or buying in new players? You can! It's stunning detail for NFL fans, but that's not me. *Dean*

Out
Now

Go camping

Mini-camp mode returns, rocking as hard as ever. How does it work? Find out below...



■ Stay in pocket. Pass to the correct dummy



■ Watch the runs. Pass the ball through rings



■ Punt ball at targets in the corner



■ Jink past defenders and tag all the flags

Monsters: extinct

All that monster mayhem ain't gonna happen, sports fans.



■ Sadly, Frankenstein will not be head-butting Troy Aikman. The dumping of *Madden 2004* on GBA in Europe means some clever 'link-up only' extras have disappeared. It was only a bunch of crazy teams like Monsters and Mummies, but there you go.



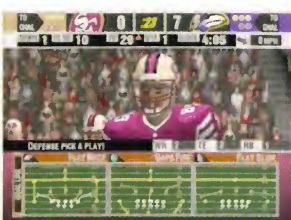
■ Kick it between the yellow posts, dumb ass



■ The Bears dee-fence do their best impression of how girls catch a ball

DEPTH CHART						
SUB QB 1 WITH						
NAME	POS	OVR	AGE	SPD	STR	
1 J. GARCIA	QB	93	33	67	95	
2 T. RAYTAY	QB	79	25	98	97	
3 B. DOMAN	QB	86	25	76	91	
NAME	POS	OVR	AGE	SPD	STR	
4 J. GARCIA	QB	93	33	67	95	
5 T. RAYTAY	QB	79	25	98	97	
6 B. DOMAN	QB	86	25	76	91	

■ Flip over for more stats; Jeff is 9'2" and eats his neighbours' dogs



■ Two Buccaneers scrap over the corpse of Cedrick Wilson

So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You want to own the best American football game ever, be you a fan or an NFL novice.

No if...

You own the last one and new rosters and slight gameplay tweaks don't do it for you.

You'll love it if you like...

The Second Amendment, apple pie, 'freedom' and king-sized bags of Potato Chips.

GRAPHICS

8

Great likenesses, mostly good animation and loads of impressive stadia

SOUND

8

The commentators sound a bit bored, but they've got plenty to say.

GAMEPLAY

9

It captures the sport almost perfectly and Playmaking is a neat feature.

LIFE SPAN

1 YEAR

You'll play until the next one comes out. But only if you like it, that is.

VERDICT

► This is five-per cent better than 2003. It's the new Best Gridiron Game Ever. Stateside they're already going berserk, but it's wasted on us. The Playmaker and Owner options rock, but let's see what EA does next.



BEST BIT: It's an incredibly realistic and fantastically in-depth experience.

WORST BIT: It's a screen from Madden 2003. Notice the difference?

SECOND OPINION

► Madden games are always good and 2004 is no different. For fans like me, it's essential, but the lack of new features is something to be considered. Dom

NOM UK'S RATING

90%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK



Tested

First. Official. Best.

GAME INFO

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Eidos

Website: www.eidosinteractive.co.uk

Players: 1-2

Memory: 2 blocks



■ The amazing reflection effect on the rear window is actually mirroring what's in front of the car. Crazy!



The Italian Job: LA Heist

Doughnut I not like that... Geddit? No?!

➤ The first thing that strikes you about *The Italian Job* is how stunning it looks. Its creators have crafted a highly believable environment, from the lens flare of the sun to the plume of smoke rising from your car's broken bonnet, and they've even somehow managed to conjure up a reflective effect on the back window of your motor. It's pure genius. It really makes us happy when someone pushed the N64 to its limits. What? Oh yeah, sorry...

Out Now
This game of the remake of the film is about as good as you'd expect: not very. It's not that there's all that much wrong, apart from a total lack of inspiration. *The Italian Job* is a fairly solid and

speedy driving game in the mould of *Crazy Taxi* where you hack it from A to B – preferably not via C, D or E, lest you run out of time. Get to B before 0:00 and you'll get the next chapter and an assessment of your driving skills. Getting to know your way around the streets of Downtown LA and the other areas is a must, but it doesn't take long and soon you'll be completing objectives in far less than the allotted times.

If successful you'll be 'treated' to cut-scenes that appear to follow the plot of the movie – we've not seen it, but we sure hope it's more interesting than these are. All you get is a bunch of cityscape shots and some voice-over guy trying to sound like Mark Wahlberg. He doesn't. These interludes don't reward you for completing levels, but –

surprise, surprise – you can unlock different cars for use in the Circuit Racing and Free Ride modes. There are also film stills, interviews, concept art – all the stuff you probably won't bother looking at. Stop it, guys, you're spoiling us.

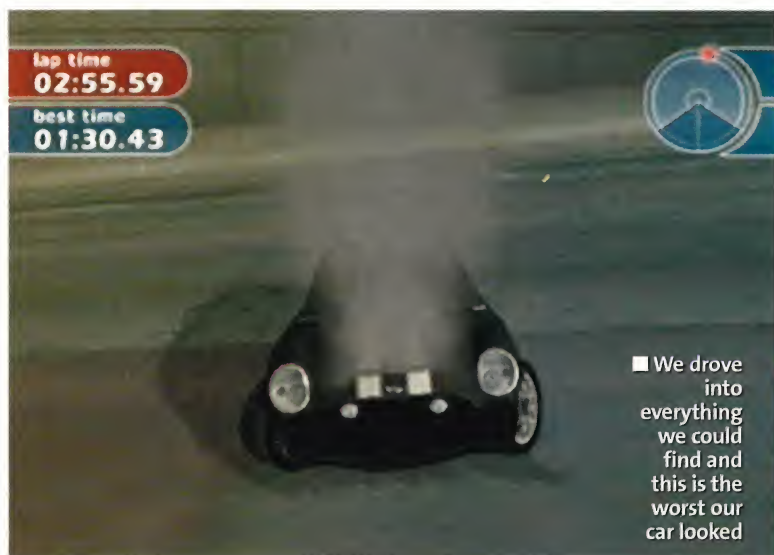
What *The Italian Job* does have is some cool-ish stunt driving (see that box over there), but if you're expecting a crowd of Japanese tourists to snap and clap your antics, forget about it. The city streets are about as crowded as a One True Voice gig. In fact, the whole of LA looks like there's been an outbreak of the ebola virus, minus all the haemorrhaging of

course; no pedestrians; no animals; no newspaper stands; no-one to wash your windscreen at the traffic lights – that's poor.

The lack of effort really becomes apparent when you compare this with the *Italian Job* game on PSone, which followed

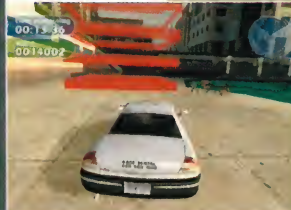
“LA looks like there's been an outbreak of the ebola virus, minus all the haemorrhaging.”

the plot of the superior original film – at least there you could really tear your motor to pieces on the scenery if you fancied it. Here, you'll finish every level without much damage at all, and seemingly no loss of



■ This must be the quietest train station in the world...

■ We drove into everything we could find and this is the worst our car looked





■ This ramp leads to certain death. Ah, what the hell



■ Weird how the cars' shadows are all different... must be those two suns

Stunts galore

Use these crazy stunts to impress fickle females and learn about reconstructive surgery

■ The best bits about *The Italian Job* are the Stunt mode and the tricks you

have to pull to progress in the main Story mode. There are a few cool

jumps and we had some fun doughnutting on the freeways in Downtown LA. Also, the V button gets your Mini up onto two wheels (which is great for cornering) and you can drive through cafes and shopping malls, but basically it's still pretty crap.



performance, although crashes reflect badly on your ranking. Completing a tough level with a motor that looks like it's just driven out of the dealer's would be rewarding if you'd actually managed a perfect drive, but here you've an even higher

chance of a high-speed collision than a fart-seeking missile aimed at the world's largest arse.

Other annoyances that blight your enjoyment include your motor's ability to smash through traffic cones and boxes, but not tiny whiplash-

inducing fences, and having to go right back to the start of the level if you balls up one of the missions. Having said that, while frustrating at least it stretches the game out for a bit. Whether that's a good thing or not is up to you. *Kingsley*



■ Racing in surveillance vans seems kind of... pointless, really



■ Have a go at doughnutting until you vomit all over this dodgy game



So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You love second-rate movie tie-ins and bog-standard driving games.

No if...

You want first-class racing and a story to match. This has neither of those things.

You'll love it if you like...

People laughing as you trade it in the day after you got it, just like you did with *Driven*.

GRAPHICS

7

Fairly solid and speedy, but lacking the attention to detail necessary to impress.

SOUND

6

A waste of Dolby – it'll tell you where the police are, but then so does the radar.

GAMEPLAY

6

It's really as good as it could've been. We certainly hope the film isn't this dull.

LIFE SPAN

3 DAYS

It's got 'rental' written all over it in a big, fat letters. You won't play for long.

VERDICT

> Why do they keep short-changing us? Does every gamer have 'sucker' written on their forehead? Okay, let's all take a pledge: 'I will never buy another movie tie-in, until there's a good one.' See? Now they're scared...



BEST BIT: The stunts and Stunt mode. Or maybe the Union Jack Mini.

WORST BIT: The total lack of atmosphere. Maybe it fell out of the box.

SECOND OPINION

> Why are the streets so empty? I'm fairly sure that more than five people in LA have cars. The *Crazy Taxi* plagiarism is dodgy – it's all very middle of the 'road'. Ha! Dean

NOM UK'S RATING

62%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK



Tested

First. Official. Best.

GAME INFO

Price: £39.99

Publisher: Activision

Website: www.extremeskateadventure.com

Players: 1-2

Memory: 9 blocks



■ Disney fans will thrill to locations like Andy's Room!



■ Tony Hawk's favourites are mixed with new stunts



■ Timone crosses the line...



■ ... Jessie just looks bored



■ (Above) Simba wonders who spiked his buffalo



■ Minor Disney characters do skating... winner!



Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure

It's not *Extreme*, it's *Excrement*. This needs to be hunted down and shot.

> It begs the question: 'Why?' Why do we have to be subjected to another classic game rip-off plastered from head to toe in puke-inducing Disney stars. We love your films, Buzz, but we wish you did just get the hell beyond infinity like you always said you would, because this is just a waste of everyone's time. It could be argued that the *Pro Skater* games are getting a little tired with their annual airings, but copying a classic sports sim is just not on, especially when it's done as badly as this.

The press blurb that came with the game reads: 'Designed to appeal to children and teens ages 6-14.' Now let's look at that a little more closely, shall we? For anyone in their teens and interested in skateboarding

you'd go for *Tony Hawk's* every time. You can get it for as little as £18 now if you look hard enough on the Net and it'll give you hours more gameplay than this. As for your kid brother or sister they're probably too interested in *Pokémon* or *SSBM*

"We love your films, Buzz, but get the hell beyond infinity - this is a waste of time."

to be bothered begging Mum or Dad to get this game.

But listen to the rest of the press blurb we got sent: '*DESA* uses *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* engine technology'. Well sure it does and as great as that was,

it's just being lazy. We're nearly a year on from *THPS4*, surely enough time to give the look a complete overhaul, but all that's changed is Disney stars replacing Tony and the Campus being magically twisted into Andy's Room. Objectives appear in exactly the same kind of menus, with exactly the same style text, telling you to find exactly the same SKATE letters, beat 15,000 points or perform moves during spine transfers. It's just a shameless cash-in trying to reel in anyone who loves some of the top Disney films in *Toy Story*, *The Lion King* and *Tarzan*.

Out Now

There's even the same sound effect when you complete an objective!

But even *Skate Adventure's* new stuff makes a mockery of the years you've spent perfecting your grinds and manuals. Imagine an adventure where all you have to do is walk down the street to save the world. It'd be the easiest game you've ever played, right?

Well imagine this. One of Simba's aims at Pride Rock is to guide a wildebeest to some grass. Just skate behind him for eight seconds. No grinds, no hazards, nothing. One goal down and it's the easiest thing you've ever done on GameCube. Why they called it *Extreme Skate* is anyone's guess 'cos there'll be plenty more infantile challenges before you're through. **Tim**

One-trick pony

Disney's *Extreme Skate Adventure* summed up in one easy move

■ Do you want to get 15,000 points with just one move? It's dead easy when you know how to Hand Plant. The balance meter is nowhere near as tough to handle as the one in *THPS4* – you could spend minutes up there, even with the meter hanging on the edge.



■ Jessie tries to put a brave face on all the skating mediocrity



■ Hamm takes a good look up Buzz's spacesuit



■ Tarzan skates toward the business end of a big python. Not very clever



■ Elephants cheat at skateboarding by using their huge ears. Exterminate them all



■ Ha hah aha aha ha aha... you're gonna fall off



So, should you buy it?



Yes if...

You want a cartoon skateboarding game that's better than Konami's effort.

No if...

You've ever played any *Pro Skater* game – even the N64 version beats this cobbler.

You'll love it if you like...

To play easy games. If *Pro Skater*'s too hard for you then this easy sim may appeal.

GRAPHICS

5

This doesn't look like a GameCube game. The visuals are verging on sub-N64.

SOUND

5

Stick on a Busted CD. Even they're better than the rubbish served up here.

GAMEPLAY

5

We did 18 goals in 30 minutes – most of which were identical to *Pro Skater* ones.

LIFE SPAN

1 MONTH

That's if you're new to skate games. If you're a *Tony Hawk*'s fan it'll be a week.

VERDICT

➤ There hasn't been one decent Disney title in GameCube's short life and this joins that sorry list. It's a mess of simple ideas aimed at youngsters that just doesn't work. Whatever your age, stick with *Tony Hawk*.



BEST BIT: Seeing the nods to classic arcade games in Pizza Planet.

WORST BIT: How can Jane skate on a mirror when it has no wheels?!

SECOND OPINION

➤ This would be alright as a mini-game rather than a game in itself. It's not as deep or challenging as *Tony* and you'd be better off practising *THPS3* or 4. Dom

NOM UK'S RATING

51%

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK @ WWW.NINTENDOMAGAZINE.CO.UK

The games we didn't

Disney's Magical Quest 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PRICE: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1-2
GAME SAVE: CART SAVE

■ Mickey and Minnie return to GBA in this sequel to last year's *Magical Quest* title. Dastardly Pete's up to no good again and you've got to go out into the enchanted lands and sort the git out.

Early levels are satisfying with a good selection of enemies. Mickey has acquired the Mario 'grab-enemy-and-throw' move and it's good to lay waste to monsters by lobbing one of them at the others. Once you start getting into the game though the fun is swept from under your feet. The levels soon become unnecessarily tough with pixel-perfect jumps and the timing of a session drummer required to progress. The boss battles become annoying, too. Graphically impressive and initially playable, but ultimately disappointing. Only buy this if the shop's run out of Mario games.



NOM UK'S
RATING

69

Mortal Kombat Deadly Alliance: Tournament Edition

GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: MIDWAY
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PRICE: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1-2
GAME SAVE: CART SAVE

■ Or, *How To Re-release A Title By Pretending That It's Different To What Came Out Last Year*. This uses the same engine as *Deadly Alliance*, but some new modes have been added to satisfy fans. Sort of.

The main addition is the four-player tag team meaning you and a mate can choose two Kombatants a piece and battle to your heart's content.

The actual fighting, remains unchanged. It's good for the GBA and certainly better than the dire original *Mortal Kombat* game, plus there are loads of combos and characters to unlock. But it just doesn't move with the same fluidity of the better 2D fighting games, like *Street Fighter*. If it's fast fighting action you crave then *Alpha 3* is the better bet.



NOM UK'S
RATING

71

Space Channel 5: Ulala's Cosmic Attack

GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PRICE: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1
GAME SAVE: CART SAVE

■ It's a cool concept, so why isn't this sitting on the right side of 80%? Because it stutters in the cramped confines of a GBA screen, that's why. It looks alright, but if you've seen the Dreamcast original it might disappoint.

More importantly, and unlike most rhythm games, it's quite difficult to play, requiring a really harsh level of accuracy. If you don't mind the idea of tiny aliens screaming instructions this might help you kill ten minutes on the bus, but when a relaxed 'up... left... up... shoot' becomes a frenetic 'down, right, up, shoot, <crackle>, left, <fzzzt>', our arthritis-ridden hands just couldn't keep up. We swear we were hitting the beats, but no dice. It would've been easier with some icons to follow. Or maybe if we had batteries in the NOM UK hearing aid.



NOM UK'S
RATING

66

Mr. Nutz

GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ATARI
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 19TH
PRICE: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1
GAME SAVE: PASSWORD

■ There's nothing remotely inspiring to be found here. The only real surprise is that somebody bothered remaking this run-of-the-mill Super NES platformer at all. Are there really so few new ideas that we need to put up with this kind of dirge every month?

Anyway, the plot is far too rich and intriguing to be done justice here and the sublime way in which the game's creators have made Mr. Nutz jump, swish his tail AND throw nuts, beggars belief. Slow down guys, you're making our heads spin. What's more it can be insanely hard, which will probably only endear it to gamers too old to appreciate its pre-school graphics.

Are we being unfair? Is it really a classic of the genre that needs to be played to understand the evolution of platform games? Was Mr. Nutz, so groundbreaking that, had it never appeared, neither would *Yoshi's Island*? NO! This was probably a backward step even in 1992, so let's shove its rotting squirrel corpse back in the dirt where it belongs.



NOM UK'S
RATING

53

want to shout about

Lego Drome Racers

GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: EA
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 19TH
PRICE: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4
MEMORY CARD: 4 BLOCKS

■ If *F-Zero GX* looks too fast for you then you could always enter *Lego Drome Racers*' 'Driving through porridge' championship. After the surprise of the GBA version we hoped the GameCube incarnation would be special, too, but it's just dull.

Career mode's where most of the action takes place as you try your hand at a number of unimaginative track and off-road courses. Handling is passable, but it constantly feels like you're fighting against the car. Weapons are available and these add spice to the races, although it appears that the other cars can attack you without you having any means of defence.

You'll also be challenged by other teams in one-on-one battles and can design your own Lego cars. All the ingredients are here for a fun racing game, but someone put the cake in the freezer rather than the oven.

Add in some incredibly annoying virtual team-mates, average graphics and a rubbish soundtrack and *Drome Racers* ends up like something from a bygone age.



NOM UK'S
RATING

55

Wallace and Gromit in Project Zoo

GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: BAM!
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 26TH
PRICE: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1
MEMORY CARD: 4 BLOCKS

■ Feathers McGraw has kidnapped your pet polar bear cub and locked himself inside the zoo. All of the machinery's broken as well, meaning Gromit has to race around collecting nuts and tools.

This is good fun in short bursts. There's a strong puzzle element and some tricky jumps to make, but the camera swings wildly and the controls aren't responsive.

Graphically it's boring, with poorly detailed characters and bland scenery. Thankfully the story line is quite amusing, but you'll be laughing at this for all the wrong reasons.



NOM UK'S
RATING

67

NHL 2004

GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: EA
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 26TH
PRICE: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4
MEMORY CARD: 28 BLOCKS

■ Turn back to p94 and see how an update should look. *Madden 2003* was good, *2004* kept the same principles, added a bit more and hey presto; another good game. Now look at this. *NHL 2003* was broken and *2004* isn't fixed. You can slap on as many new modes as you want, but if the basics are broke then it still won't work.

NHL 2004 doesn't even look that good and there's truly dreadful slow down. Controls feel sloppy and awkward and you always feel like you're chasing the game rather than getting stuck in. It doesn't help that your team-mates dawdle around the rink and generally do their best to get in your way.

If you persevere you can start your own NHL Dynasty and try and take a side to glory. You can even choose what you look like from a selection of overweight, overpaid, over-the-hill men. If only this sort of detail was evident through the whole game. Midway's *NHL Hitz 20-03* is a preferable option if you want some slapshot action 'cos this needs serious work.



NOM UK'S
RATING

49

Finding Nemo

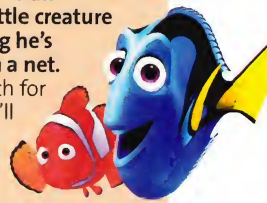
GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: THQ
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 26TH
PRICE: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1
MEMORY CARD: 1 BLOCK

■ It's Nemo's first day at school and his dad is anxious that he should get there on time. But Nemo's an adventurous little creature and before long he's been caught in a net.

In your search for the scamp you'll be helped and hindered by the forgetful Dory and Bruce the Great White shark. There's loads of variety in the early levels and a number of bonus objectives to fulfil. But things soon start getting repetitive and the intense button bashing levels will turn your thumbs into mush.

Graphically the game is impressive in places and FMV sequences break up the levels. The music is good too, very dramatic orchestrated stuff.

THQ's movie licenses are usually cheap cash-ins, but *Nemo* does enough to rise above average. If you can conquer the frustration, put up with the immense loading times and you think your thumbs are up to the challenge then you should give it a try.



NOM UK'S
RATING

64



"No! Like this!"

You've bought them now tell us how you'd change 'em

**What's
your
verdict?**

Rogue Squadron

II is the only game that comes close to bringing the movies to a console. There's no way to describe blasting around Hoth and hearing Vader say 'The Force is strong with this one' as you fly down the trench is unsurpassed.

John Zeepvat, Milton Keynes



"Samus should have a proper jetpack in Metroid Prime not the space jump – it'd be much cooler!"

Ricky Nottage,
Oxford

Zelda: The Wind Waker

Sneaking around the Forsaken Fortress is scary – I even whispered instead of talking as it felt like the TV was listening to me! It's an absorbing game, but it's far too short!
Daniel McCarthy, Thatcham

The Wind Waker is a vast game that seems too cartoony at first. But it has everything you could want – sword fights, adventure, a decent plot and puzzles. But come on Nintendo the end battle's a doddle.
Megan Tupper, Midhurst

Zelda games have always provided us with a sense of magic, something that cannot be explained, only experienced. *The Wind Waker* is no exception and is arguably Nintendo's greatest achievement. The graphics create a believable world to play in and the gameplay is as unique as always. Make no mistake, this game is truly special.
Alastair Reynolds, Newbury

The *Zelda* legend continues! Link's latest has once again left fans remembering just why Nintendo is the king of video games. And with more *Zelda* adventures down the road, *The Wind Waker* is one pit stop you don't wanna miss!
Daniel Andrews, Canning Town

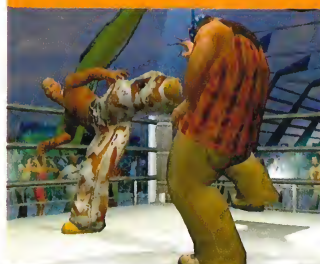
Hitman 2

Was it a hit with you, man?

■ This is one of the most challenging games I've bought in years. The graphics are absolutely outstanding and I really like the way you have to be cunning instead of rushing in and killing everyone. There's a huge amount of satisfaction when you get the Silent Assassin rating.
Seb Greaves, N. Yorks

■ The realism in this game is some of the best I've experienced on GameCube, but it's really tough in places even for the most hardcore of gamers.
G Illidge, Pontefract

■ Five-year-olds could do the stealth sections in *The Wind Waker* and *Splinter Cell*! *Hitman* is for the true stealth fans out there, but I agree with Will Haven (issue 132) – it took far too long coming to GameCube.
Sorcha Thorpe, Southend



■ *Def Jam Vendetta*
So far this is setting the pace for wrestling games on GameCube as THQ are struggling to find new options to bring their *WWE* games to life. However *Def Jam*'s choices are still too limited – there's no sign of weapons or gimmick matches like ladder and hardcore, and the tag matches of just two-on-two are quite limited. We want more characters on the screen, more weapons and more carnage!
Dave Buxton, Bristol

■ *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*
This game oozes cinematic style and feels just like you're taking part in a movie. Except this game beats any film hands down!
Michael Layton, Chorlton Cum-Hardy

2 Zelda: The Wind Waker

It's the Cameron Diaz of graphics – smooth curves and easy on the eye, but not perfect. It's too short, the final boss is far too easy and the ending didn't live up to my expectations. However, I still think it's a great game and I can't wait for the next one.
Robert Whitfield, Lichfield

The plot's excellent and the characters are awesome, but some of the cut-scenes kick in before you've even arrived at an island. It's just a little unrealistic, that's all.
Katharine Byrne, Wallington

I thought *The Wind Waker* was really short. It went too fast and was way too easy. Ganondorf was the easiest boss in the entire game!
John Murphy, Ireland



Email your improvements to the latest GameCube games to tim.street@emap.com
Remember, thumbs up or down doesn't cut it. We want to know how you'd make them better.

Pokémon

Our Say

“I was gutted by the length of the story compared to *Gold* and *Silver* – they are better.”

Jamie Hudson, Leeds

■ When my friends and I saw the new *Pokémon* game we agreed it was great. This instalment of the series is better from the start as it has a real story line instead of the ‘you’re a trainer, go catch some Pokémon’ angle. The graphics have improved loads since the original games and slightly over *Gold* and *Silver*. The fighting style could be better, though: for instance the Pokémon could perform attacks slightly differently.

Matt Wilding, via email



■ As soon as the new *Pokémon* game was released I rushed out and grabbed a copy. I opted for *Ruby* as my friend had *Sapphire* and I’ve now reached the Elite Four and have 110 Pokémon in my Pokédex. But what really annoys me is the difficulty in actually completing your Pokédex. In *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* it was simple – you either levelled-up, gave them a Stone or traded them. But in *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* you have to treat your Pokémon nicely or give them a super-rare item to hold before you can trade with a mate!

Patrick Hacker, via email

■ *Pokémon Sapphire* is a good game because even if you don’t like *Pokémon*, the games are always a laugh, due to the fact that they rock! The two-on-two battles are cool (my usual double team is Raichu and

■ *Ruby* and *Sapphire* are truly the best GBA games out there. The new characters are excellent and the two-on-two battles add bags of variety to your adventure. I would recommend this to anyone who’s even remotely interested, but where are the old characters? Fighting Team Rocket would’ve been cool!

Ben Townshend, Keighley

■ I’m very unhappy about the new *Pokémon* games because Nintendo has not yet made one that’s got all of the Pokémon in it. I think that if Nintendo keeps bringing out new *Pokémon* games without including all the old classics (like Charmander and his buddies) people will get bored of not being able to catch them all, or not being able to trade with an older game.

Lee Chilton, via email

Skarmory) and being able to plant Berries is a good addition to the game.

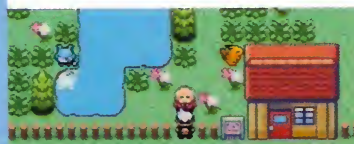
Josh, via email

Pokémon games have always been brilliant, but *Sapphire* is totally rubbish. The Game Boy Advance is so much more powerful than the Game Boy Color, but you’d never get that impression from playing this game. Very little has changed and some of the things from *Gold* and *Silver* have gone. That’s all wrong! Bring back the old *Pokémon* Nintendo they were much better!

David Francis, Southampton



It’s a feedback special on *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, and you guys have plenty to say.



The two prefer to play with other POKÉMON than each other.

■ Nintendo has yet again produced an excellent game. Some say *Pokémon* has grown childish, but if you play the game you’ll warm to it in a mere ten minutes due to the lush scenery, the crisp graphics and the deep gameplay. You’ll want to play this game until your batteries go flat, although the big letdown is that it isn’t backwards compatible, so you can only get 200 out of the 351 Pokémon that have been created in all the games. But other than that it’s great.

Ben Bonney, Preston

■ Being a grade-A Poké nut drool was pouring from my mouth like water down Niagara Falls in expectation of this game. And why not? These latest editions have all the battling, catching, training and addiction of the previous versions, but with the addition of phenomenal features such as Contests, two-on-two battling and changing weather. The only thing that really disappointed me was the reduced emphasis on time and time-events, and the absence of some of my favourite monsters. Let’s hope these problems will be rectified in the game’s supplement (like *Yellow* and *Crystal* on previous Game Boys). This is a superb game that might even appeal to Poképhobes.

James Todd, Perth



“I thought *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* rocked! I haven’t played a *Pokémon* game since *Red*, but they reminded me what all the fuss was about in the first place.”

Danny Castle, Croydon



■ Having this game pretty much means that your normal life will end and your *Pokémon* life has begun. You can blast through it with new mind-blowing Pokémon or take time and fill your Pokédex. This is a feast of new features like Beauty Contests and Berry blending. To any Poké fans (or even haters) this is a great treat for the mind and a game you must own.

L Martin, Bromley

■ I was salivating with expectation for this game and I ripped the pack open like a crazy man. Wow! What a game! In my opinion it’s the best yet with brilliant graphics and a huge world to explore. I miss some of the older Pokémon, but the new ones are almost as good. I really like the new Contests, too.

Peter Hollyhead, Morecambe

Email your improvements to the latest GBA releases to Dom at dominic.wint@emap.com Remember, thumbs up or down doesn’t cut it. We want to know how you’d make them better.

Masterclass

Busting the hardest parts

How to...

Become a true legend with Link on Soul Calibur II

The ultimate hero of Hyrule is exclusive to the GameCube version of *Soul Calibur II*, but he's no gimmick. You'll be a beat-'em-up god with the help of this masterclass...

I Short-range attacks

GETTING UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

DIFFICULTY RATING 3/6

When... Link is close enough to count the freckles on his opponent's face, you'll need some quick thinking and sharp reflexes if you want to pull off decent moves.

Watch Out For... the enemy trying to perform a bone-crunching grab move on Link. They're not trying to give him a hug, you know...

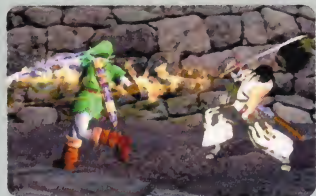
You'll Get Battered If... you try to execute a massive combo without first making some space between Link and the enemy. If you're too close, the other fighter will do his best to stop your combo before you start.

The Best Way To Win... is to either grab them with **A + B**, or, failing that, give them a quick kick in the chest followed by a bomb in the face—hit **□**, hold **X** and hit **X** again.



Link's Best Moves

Link has some seriously cool moves at his disposal and here are six of the best. These are his most useful moves and they've rescued us from many a tight situation.



Whirling Blade Attack
↓, ↓, ↓, A (hold) – a *Zelda* classic returns – it's unblockable.



Boomerang
A + X, A – Link can once again wield his faithful Boomerang.



Bow and Arrow
A + Y, Y – the Fire Arrows are here too, for long-range attacks.



Bombs
X + Y, X – Link's bombs will literally blow your enemy away.



Sword Stab
↓, ↓, Y – Link knows how to properly injure someone. Ouch.



Double Kick
↓, X, X – it looks simple, but this is extremely effective.

2 Attacking from afar

DON'T RUN IN HEAD FIRST, DUMMY

DIFFICULTY RATING 4/6

When... you find there's a gap between Link and his foe and when sword swipes will be no use.
Watch Out For... the other fighter charging up a huge move that could reach halfway across the arena.
You'll Get Battered If... you let your opponent charge up a special move or run at Link. Use any available space to your advantage.
The Best Way To Win... is to hammer **↓, ↓, X + Y**, making use of Link's Pegasus Boots as he thrusts his sword into the opponent at speed.



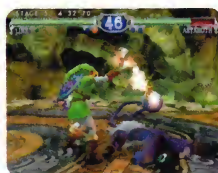
DID YOU KNOW?
 Link's second costume is the Fire Tunic, last seen in *Ocarina of Time*.

3 Floored opponents

SHOW NO MERCY TO YOUR ENEMIES

DIFFICULTY RATING 2/6

When... you've pummelled your opponent into the ground. Don't let him have his nap time.
Watch Out For... a counterattack from the floored enemy – they can easily take you by surprise.
You'll Get Battered If... you don't react. It sounds basic, but most players simply stand there and wait for their opponent to get up again. That's not good manners, it's being a fool. Be ruthless!
The Best Way To Win... is to stab the Master Sword straight through the enemy's helpless body by tapping **↓, Y** for optimum damage. Or, if you haven't got enough time for that, simply kick them in the head with **↓, X**.



4 Close to the edge

DON'T LOOK DOWN

DIFFICULTY RATING 5/6

When... your opponent has momentarily got the better of you and Link is about to topple backwards over the edge of the arena to his doom. There is still hope.
Watch Out For... any kind of attack that could push Link that one step too far. Block with **B** to protect yourself until you see a window of opportunity to attack.
You'll Get Battered If... you try to get out of your precarious situation by trying a big move. Committing yourself to a long combo of slow strikes will leave you vulnerable and you could get smashed out of the arena.



The Best Way To Win... is to turn the situation around by picking the right moment and making a sudden grab at your opponent with **A + B**. With this handy move, Link will snatch victory from the jaws of defeat by smacking his startled opponent over the edge, earning you a sneaky ring-out. Well, played Mr Link, you the man.

Masterclass

5 Enemies in the air

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

DIFFICULTY RATING 6/6

When... you smack your enemy high into the air. You need to take full advantage of the situation; he's momentarily helpless and this is the perfect time for Link to connect with a few choice moves.

Watch Out For... your timing and aim, because you'll need to strike at exactly the right moment to connect the hit, otherwise you'll have wasted the opportunity to pummel your opponent into next week.

You'll Get Battered If... you try to pull off a huge move while they're falling back to earth; they won't hang around in mid-air for you to concoct a stunning bicycle kick to their prone chin. Curse you, gravity...

The Best Way To Win... is to use this combo to make Link hit your foe into the air and follow up with some sweet mid-air blows to their sensitive groin and face. Just hit **△, Y, △, Y, □, A, A** and watch as Link dishes out maximum damage to his falling opponent. In your face!



Busting the hardest parts



6 Take out the lightweights

CAUTION AND CUNNING ARE ESSENTIAL

DIFFICULTY RATING 4/6

When... you come up against a light character such as Xianghua or Talim. You may have to alter your fighting tactics in order to win.

Watch Out For... their lightning-quick combos. These nippy featherweight characters can unleash punishing combos that can cause devastating damage in an instant.

You'll Get Battered If... you rush in and try to take the initiative by getting the first hit. Chances are, the enemy will move a whole lot quicker than you do and beat you to it, leaving you with an immediate disadvantage and the prospect of a nasty kicking.

The Best Way To Win... is to use caution. Try to keep a little distance between Link and his opponent, deflecting their attacks by tapping **□**, **○** just as they lunge out. They also come a cropper when faced with low attacks so try taking a quick swipe at their ankles with **△**, **A**.



7 Defeat the heavies

SPEED IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

DIFFICULTY RATING 4/6

When... you are faced with one of the heavier opponents such as Astaroth or Nightmare. You'll once again need to change the way in which you approach the fight.

Watch Out For... the items they wield. In general, the larger characters have equally large weapons and, although they may be slower than other opponents, they can dish out a lot more damage to your fragile face.

You'll Get Battered If... you try to match them by using Link's most powerful moves too often, because slow as your opponent is, he's still able to get a quicker attack in, leaving you open to a crippling hit.

The Best Way To Win... is to dive in fast and make use of Link's extra speed by knocking the enemy about before he knows what's going on. Give him a quick but nevertheless effective swipe with Link's Master Sword by hitting **□**, **□**, **○**.



“Smack them into the air and follow up with some blows to their groin and face.”

Destroy the toughest Cup

HOW TO...
conquer the Diamond Cup courses

F-Zero GX's speed alone makes it a tough game to beat. But with twisting, turning tracks this tough, even surviving to the finish is a challenge.

1 Cosmo Terminal

Do... take the left or right paths on the first and second intersections on the first lap, making use of the two boosts. On the second and third laps, take the centre route for the Pit Lane, because you'll be doing a lot of boosting on this course and will need all the energy you can get.

Don't... take the middle path on the second split of the course. The lane doesn't have a boost, whereas the other two routes do, as well as a long Pit Lane. Also, don't do the Spinning or Side attacks, because the course is very narrow and you could spin off the edge.

REMEMBER...

It's best to boost... on all of the straight sections just after the track splits. This track doesn't have any steep bends and there are plenty of Pit Lanes so you'll do well to boost around most of the lap. But don't let your health get too low to avoid breaking down.



NOM UK's best lap time: 1:01:060

2 Sand Ocean 2



Do... pay attention to the red signs on the side of the track that'll give you an early warning when the section of track you're on will suddenly disappear. Stay on the side of the track that the arrows point to and move to the next section quickly.

Don't... hang around a big bunch of racers as you approach thin sections. The course only gets narrow for a few metres, but if you're playing on Expert or Master, the computer-controlled ships may try to smash you over the edge. Boost or Spin attack if needed.

REMEMBER...

It's best to boost... just after the start. Boost constantly as soon as you get the power, because there are two Pit Lanes ahead. After passing through the purple temple, boost until the track bends sharply to the left. Save the rest of your boost for the final sprint.



NOM UK's best lap time: 43:692

3 Fire Field 2



Do... make sure you adjust to the angle of the track each time you land. With so many humps on this course, you'll find yourself flying through the air a lot. Landing correctly is essential.

Don't... hit the metal bars overhead. There are a few jump bars that'll launch you into the air. You don't have to hit them to win, but they can be handy to jump over the pack and gain a few cheeky places, but be sure not to hit the overhead metal structures.

REMEMBER...

It's best to boost... on the straight after the start, but watch your speed on the humps or you'll end up in the lava. After the second Pit Lane, boost to the drop, then wait and burn up the final straight.

NOM UK's best lap time: 41:554



4 Aeropolis 2

Do... use the shoulder buttons to get around the first three bends if you need extra stability, particularly on the third. The less stable craft will struggle to hold the road and will either slip or hit the walls, making you lose all your speed for the following drops.

Don't... hover for a long time on the four drops. Hovering is slow and floating to the platforms has little benefit. It's better to dive quickly and pull up at the last second.

REMEMBER...

It's best to boost... through the first two bends and recharge on the two Pit Lanes. Use a boost if you land badly to get your speed back, but don't use it all on the drop sections. Boost after the fourth one, through the ice. Recharge, then storm to the finish.



NOM UK's best lap time: 1:02:547

5 Phantom Road



NOM UK's best lap time: 40:777

Do... try to equal the speed of the other craft in the later sections, especially through the last sharp turn. It's one of the toughest bends in the game and, on Expert or Master settings, the computer will storm around it, smashing you like a Ping-Pong ball if you're going too slow.

Don't... stay on the first two Pit Lanes too long, because the track ends at the far end of each one. Also, don't use the third lane at all; it's short so you won't replenish much energy and it's very risky. You wouldn't want to crash and burn on this tough race.

REMEMBER...

It's best to boost... on the wide section of track at the start of the lap. Make up a few places before you reach the section where the track splits. Start boosting again as you pass the long ice strip and don't stop until the end, recharging on the Pit Lanes as you pass them.



HOW TO...
defeat the last four Pokémon Gym Leaders

Be the Pokémon Master

The later Gym Leaders in *Ruby* and *Sapphire* mean business. We expose them...

Gym Leader 5

Name... Norman
Where... Petalburg City
Pokémon Type... Normal
Team... Slaking Lv28, Vigoroth Lv30, Slaking Lv31



REMEMBER...

You'll do best with... Any types of Pokémon except Rock, Ghost and Steel Types – they'll be useless against Norman. Just watch out for his Façade move that could put an end to your team with its devastating efficiency. Fighting Type attacks like Mach Punch will work best, using X Attacks to help.

What you'll win... Balance Badge – Ability to use HM03 Surf and TM32 Façade

Gym Leader 6

Name... Winona
Where... Fortree City
Pokémon Type... Flying
Team... Swellow Lv31, Pelipper Lv30, Skarmory Lv32, Altaria Lv33



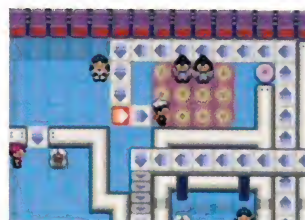
REMEMBER...

You'll do best with... Ice, Rock and Electric Pokémon. They'll work a treat against Winona's flying beasts. You'll absolutely maul her with a Pokémon like Sealeo, at Lv30 using Aurora Beam. Just make sure you keep Grass, Fighting, Ground and Bug Pokémon well out of the picture. She'll squash them.

What you'll win... Feather Badge – controls all Pokémon up to Lv70, ability to Fly and TM40 Aerial Ace

Gym Leader 7

Name... Tate and Liza
Where... Mossdeep City
Pokémon Type... Psychic
Team... Lunatone Lv42, Solrock Lv42



REMEMBER...

You'll do best with... Bug, Ghost and Dark Pokémon. They're the most effective Pokémon against Psychic Types. And considering this is a two-on-two battle, you'll need either two strong Pokémon to fight together or one ultimate Poké killer to win the battle for you. Water attacks will also serve your cause well here, particularly moves such as Muddy Water that'll attack both enemy Pokémon simultaneously.

What you'll win... Mind Badge – Ability to dive underwater and TM04 Calm Mind

Gym Leader 8

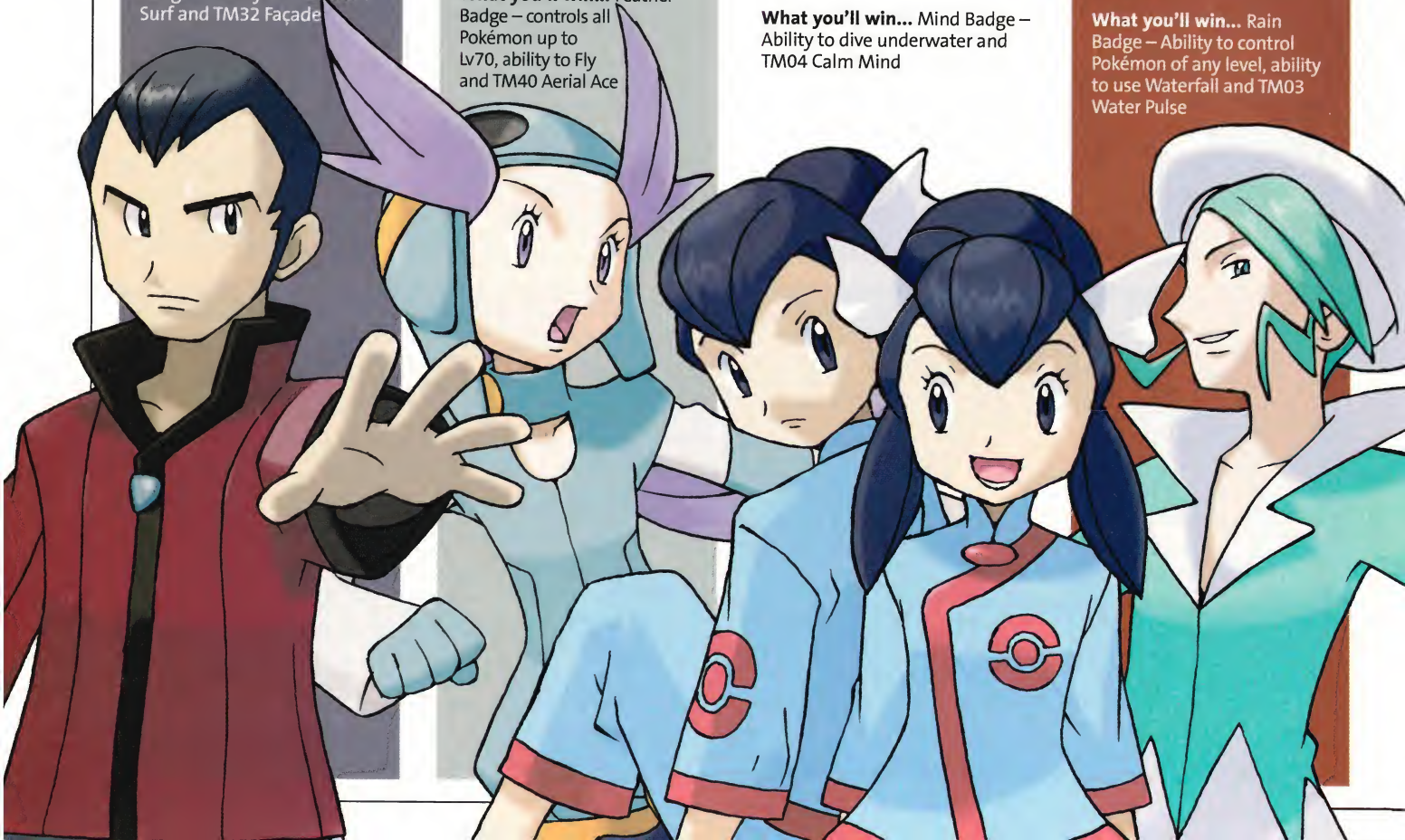
Name... Wallace
Where... Sootopolis City
Pokémon Type... Water
Team... Ludvish Lv40, Whiscash Lv42, Sealeo Lv40, Seaking Lv42, Milotic Lv43



REMEMBER...

You'll do best with... Grass and Electric Pokémon. They're the strongest force against Wallace. Everybody's favourite Pokémon, Pikachu, at Lv55 or above would mop the floor with his water-shooting critters. But if you have any Ground or Rock types in your team, take them out before you challenge this dude.

What you'll win... Rain Badge – Ability to control Pokémon of any level, ability to use Waterfall and TM03 Water Pulse



Snake, Rattle and Roll

F-Zero GX not fast enough for you? Pick up some awesome speed with this cheeky little trick...

HOW TO...

reach over 2,200kph without using boost energy



When you tweak your ship for more acceleration than top-speed, you also get a little boost of speed when you use the drift technique to turn a bend. Here's a way to get consecutive drift boosts on a wide straight.



Set your ship up for maximum acceleration. On a straight, hold U and V and turn in a direction, in this example, to the right. As your craft begins to drift, immediately release the U button to get a small boost.

Quickly re-apply the U button as you swing your ship the other way and release the V as your ship drifts left for another boost. This has to be done rapidly, but snake right and you'll really burn along.

Layin' the Smack Down

Batter your opponent in *Street Fighter II Turbo*.

HOW TO...

win a fight in under 10 seconds

Want to impress your mates on this Super NES classic? Well, just use our handy four-hit combo with Guile. Jump towards your opponent, immediately holding backwards on the D-Pad as soon as you leap and press Hard Punch in the air for the first strike. The second you land, quickly tap Hard Punch (while still holding back), then forward and

Hard Punch for a Sonic Boom, then use another Hard Punch to finish. This will chomp away 70% of their health and leave them dazed, open for your knock-out moves.



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Blood Omen 2	Matrix (Enter the)	Super Mario Sunshine
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury	Medal of Honor Frontline	Super Monkey Ball 1 & 2
BMX XXX	Mega Man Network Tran.	Super Smash Br. Melee
Burnout 1 & 2	Melroid Prime	The Italian Job*
Conflict: Desert Storm	Minority Report	The L. of Zelda: W. Waker
Crash Bandicoot	Mont. Komat: Deadly All.	The Sims
Deadly Alliance	Nightfire	Time Splitters 2
Def Jam Vendetta	Phantasy Star Online	Tony Hawk's 3 & 4
Desert Storm (Conflict)	Pikmin	Turok: Evolution
Die Hard: Vendetta	Resident Evil 0,1,2 & 3	Warrio World
Enter the Matrix	Rocky	Wave Race: B. Storm
Eternal Darkness	Simpsons: Road Rage	Wind Waker
FreeStyle	Sims	WWWE Wrestlemania X8
Godzilla: D. all Monsters	Skies of Arcadia Legends	X-Men 2: Wolverine's R
Harry Potter C. of Secrets	Smugglers Run 2: Warz.	X-Men: Next Dimension
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Sonic Adventure 2 Battle	Zelda: Master Quest
Hulk	Sonic Adventure DX	Zelda: Ocarina of Time
James Bond: Nightfire	Sonic Mega Collection	Zelda: Wind Waker
Jedi Knight 2	Speed Kings	007 Agent Under Fire
Leg. of Zelda: O. of Time	Spiderman The Movie	007 Nightfire
Leg. of Zelda: W. Waker	Splinter Cell	

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Cheats and multi

1 ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING UNLOCK MORE COs THAN YOU CAN COUNT

This is one of the most addictive games ever. Once, Kingsley was concentrating so hard that he didn't

blink for hours and gave himself crusty eye syndrome (err... sort of).

UNLOCK

Drake/Eagle

Olaf/Grit

Hachi

Hawke/Adder/Lash

Kanbei/Sonja

Jess

Colin

Sensei

Nell/Sturm

TASK

Complete the Green Earth campaign

Complete the Blue Moon campaign

Complete any campaign on Hard mode

Complete any Campaign mode

Complete the Yellow Comet campaign

Recruit Drake or Eagle

Recruit Grit or Olaf

Recruit Kanbei or Sonja

Earn an A rank overall in Campaign mode



2 F ZERO GX REVEAL AX EXTRAS ON GAMECUBE

In Japanese arcades, *F-Zero AX* has some cool alternative features to its GameCube cousin. But you can enjoy them from the comfort of your own home by completing certain races and cups...



UNLOCK

HOW

Diamond Cup	Finish in first place in the Ruby, Emerald and Sapphire Cups
Master Difficulty	Finish in first place in all the Cups on Expert Difficulty
Dark Schneider	Complete every Chapter in Story mode
F-Zero AX Machine parts	Complete the Story mode on Hard difficulty
F-Zero AX Pilots	Complete the Story mode on Very Hard difficulty
F-Zero AX Mute City: Sonic Oval	Finish in first place in the AX Cup
F-Zero AX Tracks	Complete all the Grand Prix tracks on Master difficulty

player

Sometimes, unlocking some cool extras in your favourite games is as easy as entering a cheat code. Sometimes it isn't. Either way, we got the know-how.

3 ENTER THE MATRIX FORGET HACKING

The awesome films convert to a not-so-awesome game, but if you're having trouble fighting off Agents, power-up with these to be unstoppable. You must open Cheat mode first.

CHEAT	WHERE	CODE
Cheat mode	Hacking Engine	CHEATE.EXE
Maximum firepower	Unlock Cheat menu	0034AFFF
Unlimited ammo	Unlock Cheat menu	1DDF2556
Unlimited Focus	Unlock Cheat menu	69E5D9E4
Unlimited health	Unlock Cheat menu	7F4DF451
Bonus test level	Unlock Cheat menu	13D2C77F
Enemies can't see you	Unlock Cheat menu	FFFFFFF1
Multiplayer fighting	Unlock Cheat menu	D5C55D1E
Faster logos	Unlock Cheat menu	7867F443

MULTIPLAYER MODS

COOL SET-UPS TO GET THE MOST FUN WITH YOUR MATES

DAN'S ARENA OF PAYNE, SUPER MARIO KART

THE SETTINGS:

Battle mode

The Battle mode in *Super Mario Kart* has always been the office favourite here at *NOM UK*. Racing is good, but when it comes to solid, head-to-head rivalry, Battle modes separate the men from the boys.

Battle Course 4

We always go for this arena because its design is simple to learn, but tough to master. There are no annoying blocks or obstacles, just walls and an open area in the middle, best for launching an attack.

Best-of-three victory

Before someone is crowned the king of *Super Mario Kart* (for the day), they have to earn it properly. One lucky win just won't be enough to prove themselves. We take it over three games, or sometimes five, if we're not too busy.

Peach and Koopa

Peach is quicker, helping her power away from a standing start if necessary. She's also better at power slides. Koopa's dead easy to master, making him great for firing Red Shells with ease.

The last time we played

WHO PLAYED: Tim and Dan

WHAT HAPPENED: Dan promised he could smash any challenger. Tim accepted. Dan reduced Tim to a single Balloon in just a couple of minutes, first with a lucky hit from a wandering Green Shell and the second with a Red Shell. It looked to be over when Dan shot another Red straight at Tim, but the jammy buggie managed to leap over it. As Dan screamed his head off he was struck by a rogue Green Shell, then a Red, only to finish Tim off with another well-aimed Shell. Go home, Tim!

Get involved

We want to know how you set up any multiplayer games. Follow what we did and send it to Multiplayer Mods at the usual address. Don't forget to include a photo of you and your mates!

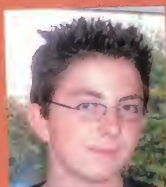


The Great NOM Challenge

Have you got what it takes to top the table? This is the place to show off your skills, game ninjas. So what are you waiting for?

Well, just like old times, the light-hating Dave Every flexes his muscles and dominates the leader board. But despite criticising other people's headgear, Dave still hasn't sent us a photo, presumably because the flash would destroy his game-cave eyes and

then he'd have to play by sound alone (to give the rest of you a chance). Dave, you rule. Lots of entries came from Cubemasters, another 'gaming clan', like our Swedish friends, Soldiers of Moist, sorry Mist.



SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE

Name: Howard Sheldon, Richard Burton, Tope Akinola

Score: 00:00:50

What happened?

Something strange is going on the world of SSBM involving huge suicidal dinosaurs. Let's hear from Howard (top): "It was about 10:30 and I was in my bedroom. First I needed to beat my sister's record of 00:04:01, I used Jigglypuff because of the B + I move and did it easily, getting a time of 00:01:26. But I knew that wasn't a winning time, so I had one last go. This time, as I prepared to strike,

Yoshi just charged at me, running straight through me and off the edge. Bizarre!" It seems a lot of you made this discovery: modest Richard Burton (middle) said "I wasn't trying to beat the high score at all - it was unintentional". While Tope Akinola (bottom) actually got the winning score

while rerecording his best time to show us how he did it: "I saw Dave Sommers challenge and decided I was going to have a go at it. A twist of fate allowed me to win

the competition". We don't know who Dave Sommers is, maybe he's a distant relative of Mark. Unless he's just a clone of the Sommer household.



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

Name: Dave Every (again!), John Zeepvat and Dean Hailstone

Score: 33 Letters

How did it happen? John Zeepvat, Dean Hailstone (pictured) and some bloke called Dave Every pulled out all the stops. John

maintains that luck plays a big part: "You need a few runs of six letters in the same hole". But Dave has a more confrontational approach: "I looked at Dean Hailstone's Craaig Dayyyvid hat and knew I had to beat him". Don't listen, Dean! Does anyone dare try for 34?

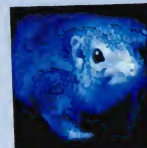


TIMESPLITTERS 2

Name: Dave Every

Score: 7.4 seconds

Talk us through it: Dave didn't mention where he was or when he did this challenge, so we're assuming it was 4.41am and he was in his game-cave, screeching away at the TV like a Nazgul. Take it away, Dave: "Shoot a couple in between the buildings and along-side the Comms hut. As you run up the steps, strafe left and right, to get every window without moving." Listen and learn, people.



Make sure you get your entries to us by Sept 26th if you want to be in next month's **NOM UK**

BEAT THIS!

NEW CHALLENGE

Super Monkey Ball, Highest score on one-player Intermediate level. Dom, 476,765.

NEW CHALLENGE

Zelda: The Wind Waker, Boating Course mini-game. Mike, 115 Rupees.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003, Princeville course. Dave Every, 43 shots.

Super Monkey Ball, Monkey Target, ten-round match. Dave Every, 10,260.

SSBM, beat the giant Yoshi in event four. Howard, Richard and Tope, 00:00:50.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Campus level, single combo. David Hall, 3,697,265.

Ikaruga, first level. Dean, 1,750,820.

Star Wars Rogue Squadron II, Death Star Attack level. John Zeepvat, 3:44.

Burnout, three laps of the Interstate course. Dom, 6:46.05.

Pikmin, grow the most Pikmin, Challenge mode, Impact Site. Kingsley, 180.

Wind Waker, mail-sort on Dragon Roost. Dave, John and Dean Hailstone, 33 letters.

Super Mario Sunshine, race vs Il Piantissimo on Gelato Beach. Dean Hailstone, 10.31 secs.

TimeSplitters 2, Behead the Undead. Dean Hailstone, 1,001,325.

Super Smash Bros. Melee, Home Run Contest. Steven Dunlop, 1,091.8m.

TimeSplitters 2, Glass Smash: Pain in the Neck challenge. Dave Every, 7.4 seconds.



SUPER MONKEY BALL

Name: Dom
Score: 476,765
How did it happen?

"11.34pm on August 26th. After a long day I had to hammer AiAi one more time. The key to success? I used the level warps to make it much quicker. Now can you try and beat me, gang?"



TONY HAWK

Name: David Hall
Score: 3,697,265

Tell us about it: "It was the Saturday after

the last **NOM UK** came out and I thought I'd give the combo a shot. I found a great line and stuck to it, using special manuals, grinds and a big variety of moves."



STAR WARS

Name: John Zeepvat
Score: 3.44
Tell us about it: "I worked

out the fastest route around shield generators, blasting and closing S-foils wherever possible. I shot the TIEs in packs, combined shooting with Homing Torpedoes to speed things up, and kept my S-foils closed down the trench."



SSBM

Name: Steven Dunlop
Score: 1,091.8m

What happened? "I used Roy, Ⓐ +

Ⓐ and half loaded it. When the bag fell I leapt up and hit it with Ⓐ + Ⓐ. I threw the bat and hit the bag when I pulled an attack on it. I then used Roy's Ⓑ attack."

What to do now

If you've bettered one of the scores on our leader board we want to hear all about it. All you need to do is get some evidence of your score (a photo of your TV or a video if you prefer) and send it along to us.

But that's not all – we want to find out where you did it, when you did it and how you did. Make sure it's interesting, 'cos if you've top-scored you'll be featured here, so you might want to include a good quality photo of you

as well (if it's a digital pic, please provide hi-res).

And if you think there's a game that deserves to be in our list, just drop us a line at the usual address.

Send your top scores to The Great NOM Challenge, Nintendo Official Magazine UK, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5UW or email them to kingsley.singleton@emap.com and he'll reply with a nice email telling you he's got your high score. From there it goes into **NOM UK's** Mother Brain and churned out into the lovely leader board you see before you. Well that's what Kingsley hopes.

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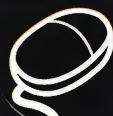
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Game Selector

Don't buy anything until you've checked it out with **NOM UK**. And if it didn't make our list, well... don't even go there, game-friend.



Check out the listings below – you'll find all the info you need to make sure you never waste your pennies again.



S = Surround PLII = Pro Logic II

Title	Score	Issue	RRP	Players	Memory	Dolby	Tips
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	37%	117	£39.99	1-2	3	–	117
2002 FIFA World Cup	28%	118	£39.99	1-4	4	S	120
Ace Golf	72%	123	£29.99	1-4	5	–	–
Aggressive Inline	79%	121	£39.99	1-2	57	–	121
ATV 2	83%	126	£39.99	1-2	27	–	126
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	77%	128	£39.99	1-2	30	–	131
Barbarian	53%	121	£39.99	1-4	3	–	–
Batman Dark Tomorrow	25%	129	£39.99	1	3	PLII	–
Batman Vengeance	50%	116	£39.99	1	2	–	–
Beach Spikers	84%	121	£39.99	1-4	3	–	121
Big Air Freestyle	69%	125	£39.99	1-2	3	–	–
Big Mutha Truckers	71%	131	£19.99	1	12	–	–
Black & Bruised	75%	130	£39.99	1-2	1	–	131
Blood Omen 2	62%	125	£39.99	1	1	PLII	125, 126
BloodRayne	57%	130	£39.99	1	1	–	–
Bloody Roar Extreme	78%	116	£39.99	1-2	3	–	124
BMX XXX	59%	124	£39.99	1-2	18	–	125
Bomberman Generation	65%	123	£39.99	1-4	3	–	–
Burnout	85%	116	£39.99	1-2	4	S	–
Burnout 2: Point of Impact 	90%	129	£39.99	1-2	5	PLII	130, 132
Capcom Vs. SNK 2 EO	76%	120	£39.99	1-2	2	–	125
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	39%	126	£29.99	1	3	–	–
Castleween	35%	129	£19.99	1	1	–	–
Cel Damage	62%	116	£39.99	1-4	2	–	116
Conflict Desert Storm	80%	128	£39.99	1-4	8	–	–
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	68%	123	£39.99	1	2	–	–
Crazy Taxi	80%	116	£39.99	1	8	–	116, 117, 131
Dakar 2	72%	128	£39.99	1-2	7	–	–
Dark Summit	45%	117	£39.99	1-4	4	–	–
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	66%	116	£39.99	1-2	4-13	–	–
Dead to Rights	83%	130	£39.99	1	10	–	132
Defender	62%	127	£39.99	1-2	1	PLII	–
Def Jam Vendetta	85%	129	£39.99	1-4	2	–	130
Die Hard Vendetta	74%	123	£39.99	1	6	–	125, 127
Disney Sports Basketball	38%	129	£39.99	1-4	15	–	–
Disney Sports Football	73%	123	£39.99	1-4	15	–	–
Disney Sports Skateboarding	40%	128	£39.99	1-2	7	–	–
Disney's Magical Mirror Starring Mickey Mouse	55%	121	£39.99	1	3	–	–
Disney's Tarzan Freeride	60%	116	£39.99	1	8	–	–
Donald Duck Quack Attack	52%	117	£39.99	1	6	–	–
Doshin The Giant	66%	122	£39.99	1	40	–	123

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	<i>Driven</i>	62%	116	£39.99	1-2	5	—	—
	<i>Eggo Mania</i>	80%	121	£29.99	1-2	3	—	—
	<i>Enter the Matrix</i>	64%	130	£39.99	1-2	10	—	130, 132
	<i>ESPN International Winter Sports 2002</i>	59%	117	£39.99	1-2	3	—	—
	<i>Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem</i> 	92%	122	£39.99	1	8	PLII	122, 123, 128, 131
	<i>Evolution Skateboarding</i>	72%	126	£39.99	1-2	27	PLII	126
	<i>Evolution Snowboarding</i>	54%	127	£39.99	1-2	2	—	—
	<i>F1 2002</i>	70%	118	£39.99	1-4	4	—	—
	<i>F1 Career Challenge</i>	74%	130	£39.99	1-4	5	—	—
	<i>FIFA 2003</i>	83%	122	£19.99 	1-4	52	—	—
	<i>Fireblade</i>	69%	125	£39.99	1	2	—	—
	<i>Freekstyle</i>	80%	121	£39.99	1-4	2	PLII	122
	<i>Frogger Beyond</i>	62%	128	£39.99	1	3	—	—
	<i>Gauntlet Dark Legacy</i>	52%	121	£39.99	1-4	8	—	121
	<i>Godzilla DAMM</i>	75%	125	£39.99	1-4	2	PLII	125
	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>	76%	124	£44.99	1	4	—	128
	<i>Hitman 2: Silent Assassin</i>	88%	131	£39.99	1	59	—	131
	<i>Hot Wheels Velocity X</i>	58%	125	£29.99	1-4	1	—	126
	<i>The Hulk</i>	57%	131	£39.99	1	3	—	131, 132
	<i>Ikaruga</i>	84%	128	£39.99	1-2	4	—	129, 130
	<i>ISS 2</i>	74%	116	£39.99	1-4	5	—	123
	<i>ISS 3</i>	51%	129	£39.99	1-4	59	—	—
	<i>James Bond 007 In... Agent Under Fire</i>	76%	118	£44.99	1-4	3	—	119, 120, 131
	<i>James Bond 007 Nightfire</i>	81%	124	£19.99 	1-4	2	—	125
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	<i>Madden NFL 2003</i>	89%	121	£39.99	1-2	59	S	121
	<i>Mario Party 4</i>	80%	123	£39.99	1-4	2	S	—
	<i>Mary-Kate and Ashley: Sweet 16 Lcsd to Drive</i>	53%	126	£29.99	1-4	4	—	—
	<i>Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2</i>	80%	123	£39.99	1-8	18	—	122, 126
	<i>Medal of Honor Frontline</i>	81%	123	£19.99 	1-4	4	—	124, 129
	<i>Mega Man Network Transmission</i>	74%	131	£39.99	1	1	—	131
	<i>Men in Black II: Alien Escape</i>	52%	126	£39.99	1	3	—	—
	<i>Metroid Prime</i> 	94%	127	£39.99	1	1	PLII	127, 129
	<i>Micro Machines</i>	71%	126	£39.99	1-4	4	—	—
	<i>Minority Report</i>	58%	125	£39.99	1-4	2	PLII	126
	<i>Monsters, Inc. Scream Arena</i>	39%	127	£29.99	1-4	4	—	127
	<i>Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance</i>	84%	125	£39.99	1-2	1	—	125, 128
	<i>MX Superfly</i>	71%	121	£39.99	1-2	8	—	122
	<i>Mystic Heroes</i>	65%	123	£39.99	1-4	6	—	—
	<i>NBA 2K3</i>	76%	127	£39.99	1-4	52	—	127
	<i>NBA Courtside</i>	82%	117	£39.99	1-4	7	—	120
	<i>NBA Live 2003</i>	55%	123	£39.99	1-2	57	—	—
	<i>NBA Street Vol. 2</i>	83%	129	£39.99	1-4	7	—	130

S = Surround PLII = Pro Logic II								
Title	Score	Issue	RRP	Players	Memory	Dolby	Tips	
 Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	74%	122	£39.99	1-2	7	PLII	124	
 NFL 2K3	82%	127	£39.99	1-4	56	-	127	
 NHL 2003	67%	121	£39.99	1-4	3	-	-	
 NHL 2K3	74%	128	£39.99	1-2	104	-	-	
 NHL Hitz 20-02	75%	116	£39.99	1-4	8	-	117, 119	
 NHL Hitz 20-03	78%	122	£39.99	1-4	8	-	-	
 Outlaw Golf	70%	128	£39.99	1-4	5	-	131	
 Pac-Man World 2	74%	126	£39.99	1	16	-	127	
 Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II	85%	127	£39.99	1-4	7	PLII	128	
 Pikmin	88%	118	£19.99	1	4	-	118, 119, 130	PLAYER'S CHOICE
 P.N.03	56%	132	£39.99	1	5	-	-	
 Pro Rally	62%	122	£39.99	1-4	3	PLII	-	
 Pro Tennis WTA Tour	58%	122	£39.99	1-4	5	-	-	
 Rally Championship	71%	126	£29.99	1-4	6	-	-	
 Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	87%	126	£39.99	1-4	8	PLII	-	
 Red Card	83%	119	£39.99	1-2	12	-	120	
 Red Faction II	81%	129	£39.99	1-4	7	-	130	
 Reign of Fire	54%	124	£39.99	1	3	PLII	-	
 Resident Evil 2	69%	129	£29.99	1	1	-	131	
 Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	73%	129	£29.99	1	1	-	-	
 Resident Evil	88%	120	£44.99	1	8	-	120, 121, 123, 128	
 Resident Evil Zero	86%	126	£44.99	1	9	-	126, 127	
 Robotech Battlecry	56%	125	£39.99	1-2	1	-	126	
 Rocket Power: Beach Bandits	31%	123	£29.99	1-2	10	-	-	
 Rocky 	90%	123	£39.99	1-16	2	-	125	
 Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	45%	123	£39.99	1	5	-	-	
 Sega Soccer Slam	81%	122	£39.99	1-4	5	-	123	
 Shrek: Extra Large	40%	126	£39.99	1	1	-	-	
 The Simpsons Road Rage	54%	117	£39.99	1-2	4	-	117, 118, 119	
 The Sims	78%	129	£39.99	1	60	-	129, 130	
 Skies of Arcadia Legends	82%	129	£39.99	1	3	-	-	
 Smuggler's Run: Warzones	80%	122	£39.99	1-4	6	-	-	
 Sonic Mega Collection	84%	127	£39.99	1-2	2	-	127, 128	
 Sonic Adventure 2 Battle	62%	116	£44.99	1-2	3	-	116, 125	
 Sonic Adventure DX Director's Cut	71%	130	£39.99	1	9	-	-	
 Speed Kings	68%	130	£39.99	1-2	2	-	-	
 Spider-Man	75%	118	£39.99	1	2	S	118, 119, 122	
 SpyHunter	78%	117	£39.99	1-2	2	-	118	
 Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	58%	124	£39.99	1	8	-	-	
 SSX Tricky	77%	118	£44.99	1-2	5	S	120	
 Star Fox Adventures	84%	123	£44.99	1	3	PLII	124-129	
 Star Wars Bounty Hunter	78%	125	£39.99	1	2	PLII	125	
 Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	84%	123	£39.99	1-2	3	-	125, 129	
 Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II 	92%	116	£44.99	1	3	PLII	117, 118, 119, 122, 128	
 Star Wars The Clone Wars	77%	123	£39.99	1-4	3	PLII	124	
 Summoner: A Goddess Reborn	74%	127	£39.99	1	19	-	-	
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	36%	128	£39.99	1	4	-	-	
Super Bubble Pop	32%	127	£39.99	1-2	1	-	-	
Super Mario Sunshine 	93%	121	£39.99	1	7	PLII	121, 124, 126, 128, 130	
Super Monkey Ball 	92%	116	£44.99	1-4	3	PLII	116, 117	
Super Monkey Ball 2 	90%	126	£39.99	1-4	2	PLII	126, 128-130	

S = Surround PLII = Pro Logic II

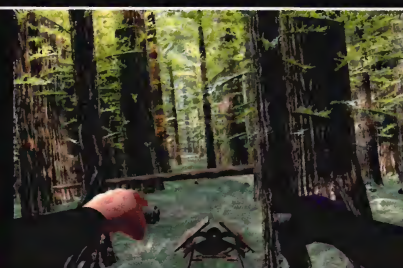
Title	Score	Issue	RRP	Players	Memory	Dolby	Tips
 Super Smash Bros. Melee BUY IT!	90%	117	£19.99	1-4	3	—	119, 120, 121, 125, 129
 SX Superstar	70%	131	£19.99	1-2	3	—	—
 Taz Wanted	47%	122	£39.99	1-2	2	—	—
 Tetris Worlds	46%	122	£29.99	1-4	8	—	—
 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003 BUY IT!	90%	124	£39.99	1-4	32	—	124
 TimeSplitters 2 BUY IT!	92%	122	£44.99	1-4	2	—	122, 123, 124, 128, 130
 Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	59%	127	£39.99	1-2	17	—	—
 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell BUY IT!	92%	129	£39.99	1	17	—	129, 130, 131
 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	88%	116	£44.99	1-2	6-8	S	116, 117, 129, 131
 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 BUY IT!	92%	123	£39.99	1-2	7	PLII	126, 127
 Top Angler Real Bass Fishing	69%	128	£39.99	1	3	—	—
 Top Gun Combat Zones	71%	121	£39.99	1-4	3	—	122
 Turok Evolution	67%	122	£39.99	1-4	3	PLII	122
 Ty The Tasmanian Tiger	75%	123	£39.99	1	1	—	127
 UFC Throwdown	58%	121	£39.99	1-4	5	—	122
 Universal Studios Theme Parks Adventure	11%	116	£44.99	1-2	3	—	—
 Vexx	72%	128	£39.99	1	2	PLII	—
 Virtua Striker 3 Ver. 2002	40%	118	£39.99	1-2	2	S	120
 V-Rally 3	71%	130	£39.99	1-4	158	—	131
 Wario World	75%	131	£39.99	1	10	—	132
 Wave Race Blue Storm	88%	116	£39.99	1-4	12	PLII	116, 118
 Worms Blast	70%	117	£39.99	1-2	3	—	—
 Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	68%	124	£39.99	1-2	19	—	125
 WWE Crush Hour	56%	129	£19.99	1-2	2	—	—
 WWE Wrestlemania X8	67%	122	£39.99	1-4	12	—	122, 124
 WWE Wrestlemania XIX	87%	132	£39.99	1-4	20	—	—
 XGIII Extreme G Racing	81%	117	£39.99	1-4	3	—	117-119
 X-Men 2: Wolverine's Revenge	68%	129	£39.99	1	4	—	—
 X-Men Next Dimension	61%	125	£39.99	1-2	3	—	126
 Zoo Cube	71%	120	£39.99	1-4	2	—	121

GBA Section

Only the best of the best get in.

Name	Score	Issue	RRP	Players	Tips
 Advance Wars	95%	110	£29.99	1-4	114, 115, 121
 Breath of Fire II	92%	118	£29.99	1	120
 Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow	90%	129	£29.99	1-2	130
 Crash Bandicoot XS	90%	116	£29.99	1	—
 Denki Blocks	90%	111	£29.99	1-4	—
 Ecks Vs Sever	91%	111	£29.99	1-4	113
 ESPN International Winter Sports	90%	113	£29.99	1-4	—
 Golden Sun	93%	114	£29.99	1-2	115, 117, 118, 120, 121, 123, 124
 Konami Crazy Racers	90%	106	£29.99	1-4	111
 The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past (inc. Four Swords)	96%	127	£29.99	1-4	127-129
 Mario Kart Super Circuit	92%	109	£29.99	1-4	109, 111-113, 115
 Metroid Fusion	93%	124	£29.99	1	126, 127, 130
 Ninja Cop	89%	132	£29.99	1	—
 Pokémon Ruby and Pokémon Sapphire	93%	131	£34.99	1-4	131
 Rayman Advance	90%	106	£29.99	1-4	109, 112
 Sonic Advance	90%	115	£29.99	1-2	115
Super Mario Advance	91%	106	£29.99	1-4	107-109, 111-113, 115
Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2	93%	115	£29.99	1-4	115, 119
Super Monkey Ball Jr	90%	127	£29.99	1-4	127, 128
Super Streetfighter II Turbo Revival	90%	111	£29.99	1-4	112
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	92%	123	£29.99	1	—
V-Rally 3	91%	118	£29.99	1-4	—
Wario Ware Inc.: Minigame Mania	93%	129	£29.99	1-2	—
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3	94%	123	£29.99	1	124, 125, 128

We Can't Wait



NEW PICS!



For These...

**MORE
NEXT
MONTH!**



Star Wars Rebel Strike: Rogue Squadron III

How can you improve on *RSII*? Make a *RSII* Co-op mode and throw it onto the *Rebel Strike* disc alongside the new game, that's how. Bargain! US GameCube owners are even being treated to pre-order goodies – a disc bursting with the original vector-graphics *Star Wars* arcade game, a Hoth level demo and a *Gladius* demo. More news on GAME's website. And with the sensational pace of the Speeder Bike stages, thumping AT-ST battles and the return of X-Wing vs TIE fighter dogfights, this is gonna be another must-have *Star Wars* title.



2-3 MONTHS

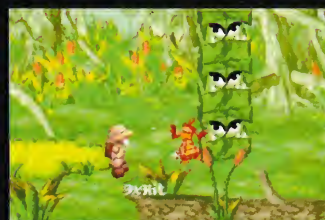
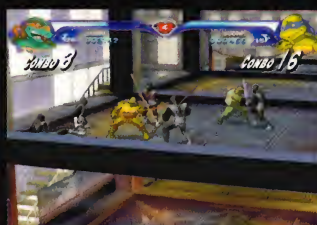
| Banjo-Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge (GBA)

Yes, you read it right: finally the duo that finished 16th and 32nd in your 100 Greatest-Ever Nintendo Games last issue are back and kicking Grunty's ass on GBA. THQ is the knight in shining armour charging in on a white steed to bring you this and it's back to the Isle o'Hags for the deadly duo battling against Gruntilda. Classic moves like the Beak Barge and the Shock Spring Jump are back... and so is Mumbo Jumbo!



| Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Hold on a minute, it isn't as bad as it seems. For one they've got rid of *Hero* and gone back to the original *Ninja Turtles*. And that's all good by us. This shell-shaded adventure is looking like a right laugh as you smash your way across town, defeating Shredder's ninja forces. Cool combos will make you a killer and comic effects like BASH! and THOK! appear as you kick ass.



| Sabrewulf (GBA)

THQ tormented us with *Scooby-Doo!* and *Disney Princess*, but they know how to make our lives happy again. Sabreman is heading out to the jungle, battling through Sabrewulf's lairs, using the creatures he finds to beat the different traps and steal back stolen valuables. Fact: *Sabrewulf* is one of ex-NOM UK editor Dave McComb's favourite ever games.



This lab will finish you. It is my greatest invention.



Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg

Yuji Naka-san's been a busy boy (see What We Know, p22) and even more screens have arrived at *NOM UK*, showing Billy's crazy action platformer. Using the power of a legendary chicken suit (don't ask) Billy's gotta return light to the land by defeating the game's bosses. It's out on November 21st.



6 MONTHS



Baten Kaitos

There's still limited info on this, but here's a bit of character info to whet your manga appetites.

The first member of your fighting group will be Gibari, a fisherman from Nashira who wants to know why the local river has gone and dried up. It's probably been too hot a summer, we reckon.

Then there's Ladekahn, the king of the Cloud Kingdom, Diadem, who has a mysterious power called White Flame.

Finally there's Rodolfo a 51-year-old lord of the Sadarusud region. According to internet reports on this guy, he's "a timid, sly character and has no reputation". A little bit like our Dom then.



Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour

The US version is already awesome. Tim even bagged a hole-in-one but it didn't save, so no-one believes him (Shut your face! - Ed).

With one of the best-ever opening scenes we've seen in a game, though not quite as good as the *Melee* opener, *Mario Golf* is a laid-back, four-player golfing extravaganza. Courses such as Peach's Invitational occur in the grounds of her castle and Blooper Beach has bunkers shaped like pelicans and crabs. Just like the Game Boy Color game of old it will even save your best shots... well, sometimes.



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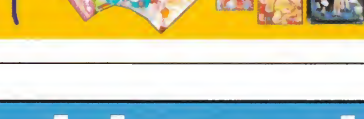
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Universal GameCube



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LOOK!

Next issue we're giving away a wicked book packed with fun facts, figures and hidden secrets about Nintendo, the games you love and the best games stars ever created.

It's the ideal gift for every Nintendo fan and with it you'll be armed to the teeth with tons of facts and info to challenge your mates.

PLUS!

Star Wars Rebel Strike

Why, the closest thing yet to the movies, Rogue Squadron III, is.



• FIFA 2004: rubbish or revolution? • Viewtiful Joe: more mint movie mayhem
• Why True Crime is 'Cube's killer Christmas game • Mazza's best GBA outing

Your Mail



The Colonel's come up trumps again this month with £50 worth of KFC vouchers for the reader who sends the Letter of the Month.

Four runners-up will receive vouchers for a new and improved Chicken Fillet Burger Meal and delicious Avalanche Ice Creams.



Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit

Thank God you printed some safety instructions in the magazine (NOM 131), because I was planning to cut open the Poké Ball and stick it around my head like an idiot, pretending to be Olimar from *Pikmin*. Thanks again for the warning, because you may have lost a loyal reader. *Will Cheesman, Brighton*
■ And we wouldn't have wanted that, would we?

Clay fighter

I thought it would be a really cool idea if there was a Sonic Game Boy Advance cover to use with my handheld. So I set to work, using a special type of modelling clay that goes hard quickly and moulded Sonic eyes, ears and spikes around the screen!
Sam Mardon, Fulham
■ We reckon that moulding a Sonic add-on out of clay might make your GBA a bit heavy. How are your arms holding up?

RUNNER-UP

The things you send

August was a record-breaking month as far as the weather goes and we're still not doing too bad temperature-wise. That's probably why Kryssa (no surname – spooky!) from Weston-Super-Mare sent us a Nintendo-red scarf. Well, the air conditioning does get a bit fierce in the office. It's as tall as Tim and easily wraps around us all, so no-one gets a chill. Maybe we'll just put it to one side until the winter kicks in, but thanks anyway!



Odds on

What are the chances of letters getting printed?
Paul McDonald, Rumney
■ 00-30, on the nose.

RUNNER-UP

Missing the point

My brother and I found *Eternal Darkness* for £10 and we thought it was a bargain. But in fact it was a real disappointment. All you do is play one level then the character snuffs it for four or five levels, which is really annoying. The Sanity Meter looks a bit like your character is drunk, too. We took the game back within days.
Liam Dingsdale, St Helens
■ Aren't you being a bit harsh? *Eternal Darkness* is more than a game; it's a whole experience. Some of the puzzles are a bit straightforward, but the deep and intriguing story line more than makes up for it. We reckon you were a bit hasty. Oh well, as long as you didn't swap it for *Enter the Matrix*.

Worth a try

I was wondering if you could send me a demo of *F-Zero GX*, because I want this game more than anybody else and I haven't even been able to play *F-Zero X* on N64, because every time I tried something ended up stopping me (no lies, I promise). So please (times infinity) can you send me a demo and, if not, can you tell me why not, because I want this game so badly.
Lee White, Streatham
■ The answer: no. The reason: we haven't got a demo of it.

Chopped liver?

In your next issue please could you have a full section on precise release dates? Precise dates are what we need if we are to buy GBA and GameCube games in the not-too-distant future.
George Lake, Bury
■ The dates we print in the magazine are always, to the best of our knowledge, correct. If a publisher decides

Collection of justice

I thought I would share my obsession with you all. Well, I've loved Nintendo since I played the NES and, to put it lightly, I've started collecting some items – here's a pic of the Ninty stuff I've got. Things not pictured include another ROB with NES and a Super NES with Scope along with lots of games for both systems. At the moment I'm on the lookout for a boxed Super NES with the Scope. I just wondered if any other people who like Nintendo are obsessed with it this much or is it just me, and, if so, do I need to see a doctor about it?
Oliver Lambert, London
■ We bow down in your presence. This is truly a collection to be proud of. Is there anyone out there who can beat that? Rarities, huge collections, lost gaming gems? Take a pic and send it in to us.



to change a release date after our mag has been printed then there's really nothing we can do about it. Sorry! Keep checking with your local games shop.

Where have you been?

I am writing to ask you about something I saw recently. In my local Sainsbury's I was looking at the videos and one caught my eye. It was called *Ballistic: Ecks Vs Sever*. I picked it up and read the back and it had the same story line as the first *Ecks Vs Sever* GBA game. So I was just wondering if they have anything to do with each other or if this is just a coincidence?
Robert Buck, Colchester
■ Duh! What do you think?

RUNNER-UP

Put me in charge

I think that if the GameCube's successor is to be a success then Nintendo needs to drastically rethink its console. There might as well be a CD/DVD player to satisfy the entertainment freaks and there has to be a strong line-up of games with a main Nintendo character in it, like Link or Mario. Also, and probably the most important

aspect of all, there must be a much larger emphasis on online gameplay. There should be headsets and things, and preferably something like Xbox Live with tournaments and challenges and stuff. That would definitely help Nintendo claw back of the market from Sony.
Sanjay Choolun, Manchester
■ All good ideas, Sanjay. But surely these aspects are pretty much given, aren't they? Sony and Microsoft aren't going to pull any punches with their next generation of hardware and Nintendo's machine will have to be, and we reckon will be, quicker and cleverer than anything we can imagine. Watch this space as they say.

Is it enough?

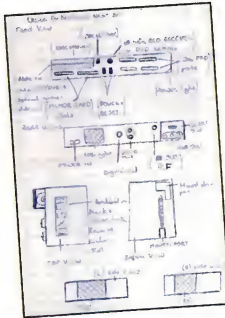
I can't believe that 75% of voters don't like GBA connectivity, especially when *The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords* was in the same issue that you asked for opinions! *Four Swords* is another game that proves just how innovative Nintendo games are. My brother and I have a real blast playing *Mad Trax* on *Rayman 3* and I think the Tingle Tuner in *The Wind Waker* is genius.
Daniel Pryce, Uckfield

How to get in touch

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What a nutter!

In his reckless haste to be the first in coming up with a design for the next Nintendo home console, Mr A Holdem of Longridge appears to have created the satanic love child of a crappy Ariston DVD player and a PS2. Don't give up the day job, Mr Holdem.



■ Connectivity is good and it's all very clever, but a lot of people feel let down by how simple it all seems. Remember that Kirby game Nintendo showed a couple of years ago? That was cool. But at E3 we got *Pac-Man* and a four-player *Zelda* game. Is that enough?

RUNNER-UP

Fair point

In issue 131 you didn't believe one reader when he said his name was Liam Gallagher? I mean, come on, you've got a Michael Jackson on the staff! Anon, via e-mail

■ Dat is true, innit.

TEXT THE EDITOR

You can let us know how you feel about the world of Nintendo on a text! Tap in 'Txt', leave a space, add your message and send it to 84070. You must get permission from the bill payer before texting us as each text costs 25p to send. Every text sent to us can be viewed at www.clubnom.com and here's just a small selection.

- F-Zero GX looks amazing. I can't wait to play it.
- True Crime Streets of LA will surely kick the pants off GTA.
- I keep finding new stuff in Pokémon Ruby. It's massive.
- Can I have your job please?
- Wrestlemania XIX. Good, but not good enough.



We don't believe you

If you ask my friends, which you most likely won't, they'll tell you that I love games to the extent of having a shrine in my room just for my GameCube console and games. I do this because I was born with a unique power which makes me extremely good at games. When I went to New York some time ago I ran into the Pokémon Centre on 48th Street and on the second floor they were playing the game which I'm the best at: *Super Smash Bros. Melee*. There were these three boys who thought they were the best. So I had to sort them out. It was a five-life match, I was Ganondorf and the others were Falco, Samus and Young Link. Of course I finished them all off and I was the last one standing. After sorting them out I had to rub their faces in it and my brother has got it all on tape to prove my god-like skills to the world.

Marcus Tomlinson, London

■ Send us a copy of the tape and maybe then we'll talk.

A word from our sponsors

Why not try an improved Chicken Fillet Burger yourself. They're available right now and prices start at only £2.45. And if you never want the summer to end then the cool Avalanche Ice Creams are still available. Priced at only 99p, the Avalanche comes in four flavours: Cadbury's Flake, Starburst Joosters, Chocolate Sauce and Crunchy M&Ms. Real good treat, yeah!



CLUB NOM

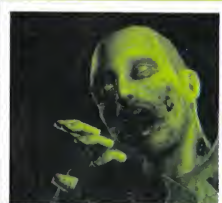
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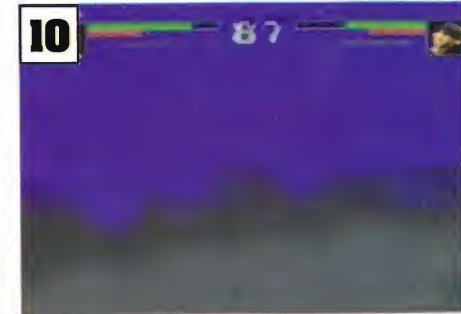
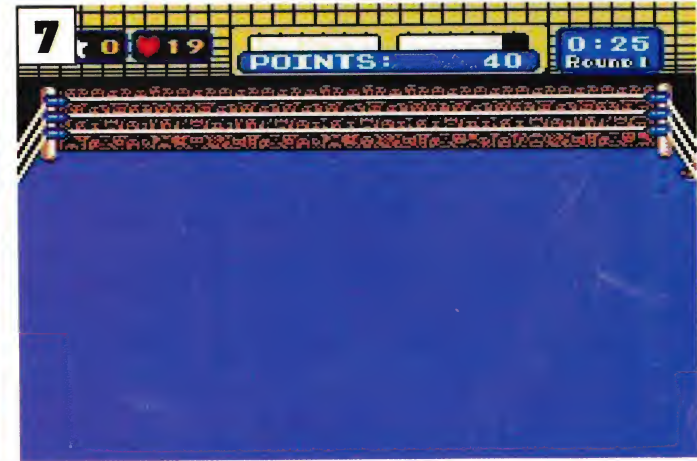
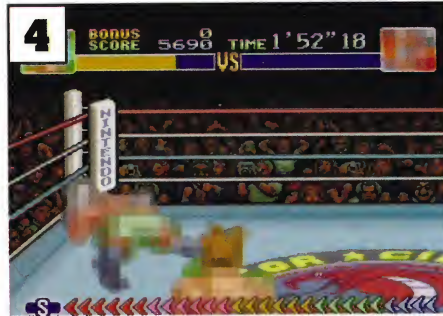
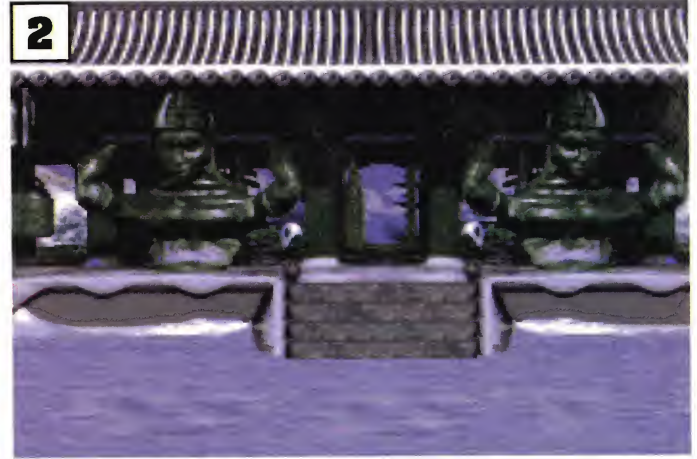
*Existing Club NOM members will automatically be entered into the Advance Wars 2 draw.



Terms and Conditions: the cost to join Club NOM is 25p. This is a one-off charge to join the club. You will then receive a text message from Club NOM asking you to select your favourite games genre. You reply to Club NOM, selecting your genre. There is no charge for this second message or additional texts from Club NOM. Please note that your own operator (O2, Vodafone, T-Mobile, Orange, etc) may charge you to send and receive texts as part of your mobile package. The service currently doesn't work on the Virgin network.

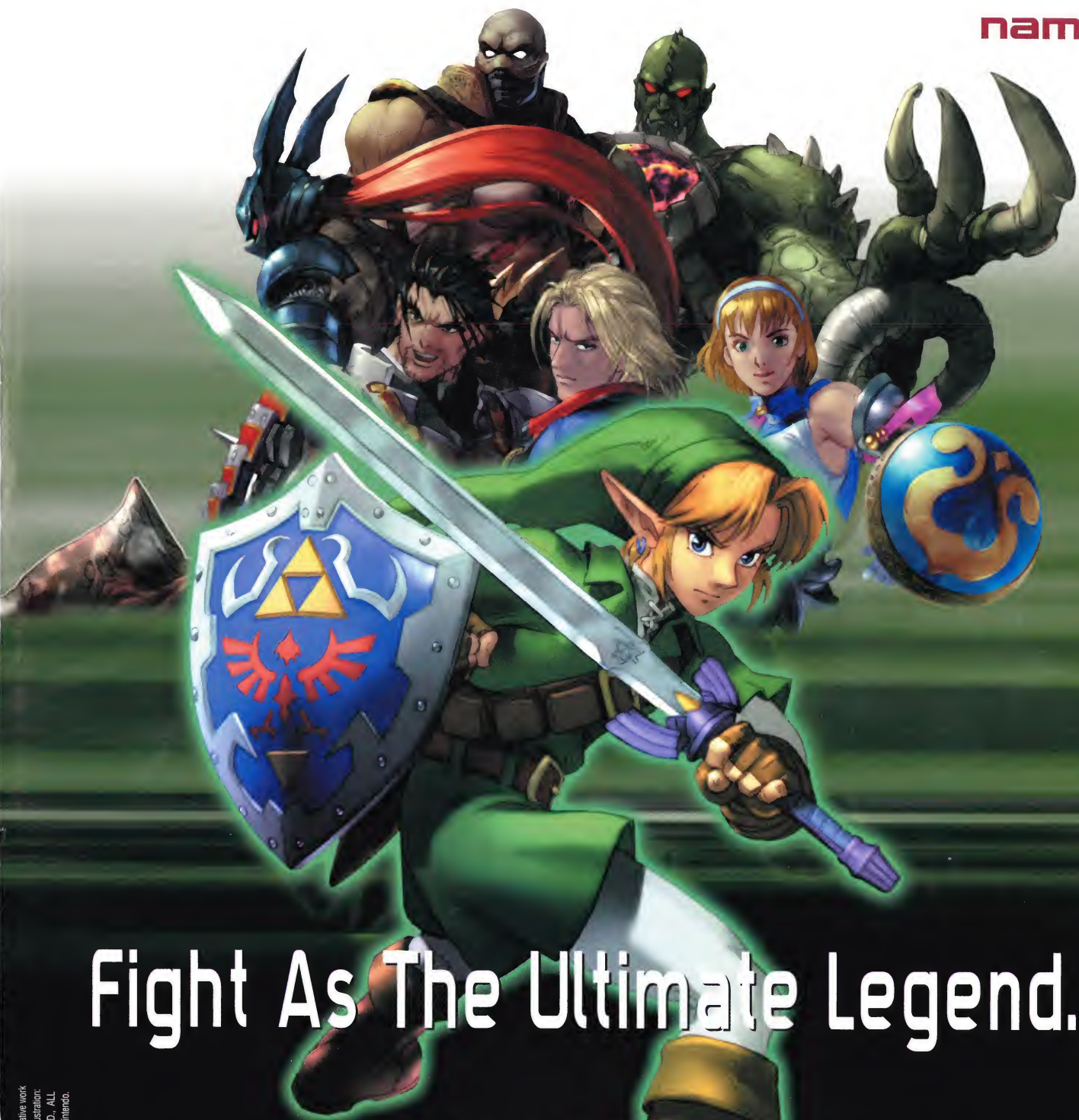
Name that Game

Guess all ten and be this month's King of Games.



Answers: (1) Street Fighter II Turbo (2) Killer Instinct (3) Mortal Kombat (4) Super Punch-Out!! (5) Mortal Kombat 4 (6) Soul Calibur II (7) Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! (8) Super Smash Bros. Melee (9) Pokémon Stadium 2 (10) ClayFighters 63 1/3

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SOUL CALIBUR II

Out 26th September

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